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IN THIS ISSUE


038

032

138

06 News: The latest information from the shooting industry

08 Kitbox: Essential products and information for the well-equipped shooter

010 GUN MART WEBSITE DIRECTORY:

The essential online listings for the sporting gun

012 Best on Test: Our expert reviewers bring you a selection of shooting's top new products

022 Wardrobe: Our round-up of what the well-dressed shooter in the field is wearing

AIRGUNS

026 Gun Test: Mark Camoccio gets his hands on a serious piece of equipment from Rapid Air Weapons; the HM1000X

032 Ammo Test: Mark Camoccio checks out some new pellets from BSA

038 Gun Test: Pete Wadeson gives credit to the Weihrauch HW80KS

042 Round-up: Pete Wadeson lists his top 10 lightweight multi-shot PCP air rifles for hunting

048 Gun Test: Mark Camoccio gets to grips with the Gamo Whisper Sting

FIELD CUTLERY

052 This month's round-up of all the best cutting-edge tools of the trade

FIREARMS

060 Gun Test: After using all the smaller variants, Chris Parkin gets his hands on the Ruger Precision Rifle in .338

100 Reloading Basics: Mark Underwood explores some useful reloading accessories that can really help with the speed of production and ammo consistency

106 Gun Test: Pete Moore looks at the new Tikka T3x Super Varmint and finds a rifle much to his taste

126 Product: A selection of products for the keen shooter



157

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086



070

Shooting SPORTS

- 070 Gun Test:** Jules Whicker takes a fresh look at Steyr's radical Scout rifle
- 074 Night Vision:** Jules Whicker checks out the latest thermal spotters from Guide IR
- 080 Product:** Pete Moore looks at the Lee Value 4-Hole Turret Press with Auto Index Kit
- 086 Scope Test:** Bruce Potts gets the chance to exercise a Leupold Mark 5HD 5-25x56
- 090 Reloading:** Bruce Potts discusses Hornady's Lock-n-Load Rimfire Thickness Gauge

1000s OF REVIEWS
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- 126 Product:** Tim Finley gets to grips with some red dot sights from Hawke to see how fast he can go

COUNTRY & SHOTGUN

- 132 Gun Test:** Bruce Potts reviews a quick-handling semi-auto from Beretta; the A400 Ultralite
- 138 Gun Test:** Tim Finley tries out an under lever shotgun called the Bobcat

ANTIQUES & MILITARIA

- 142 Events:** John Norris takes a look at what's been happening during lockdown
- 150 Re-Enactment:** John Norris talks about the Duke of Wellington's duel with the 10th Earl of Winchelsea
- 157 Antique Gun Test:** Derek Landers takes a brief look at a reproduction of the carbine that was used by the losing side at the Battle of the Little Big Horn
- 162 INDEX TO ADVERTISERS**

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Well, the Olympics are going well, aren't they? I for one was pleased to hear that Matt Coward-Holley managed to win a bronze medal for Great Britain in men's trap shooting. I always think it is important to talk about these things with anyone who will listen. We need as many people as possible to take an interest in clay pigeon shooting or any form of shooting come to think of it!

Moving onto the magazine, here we have the September issue. As usual, it's packed with content! Staring in the airgun section, Mark Camoccio has reviewed a seriously accurate £2149 PCP airgun called the RAW HM1000X. He has also written about a new range of hi-end pellets from BSA and the Gamo Whisper Sting. Pete Wadeson has listed his top-10 lightweight multi-shot PCP air rifles for hunting, plus he has reviewed the Weihrauch HW80KS.

Firearms wise, I have included a review of the Ruger Precision Rifle in .338 by Chris Parkin, the Steyr Scout rifle by Jules Whicker and the new Tikka T3x Super Varmint by Peter Moore. There is also a write up on the Leupold Mark 5HD 5-25x56 rifle scope.

The shotgun section includes a test of the Beretta A400 Ultralite by Bruce Potts and a review of an under lever shotgun called the Bobcat by Tim Finley.

This issue also sees John Norris talking about a recent event he attended as well the Duke of Wellington's duel with the 10th Earl of Winchelsea. Derek Landers has written about the Pedersoli Springfield Trapdoor Carbine.

Enjoy, and as always, safe shooting!

Ed Jackson
Managing Editor

GUN MART news

All the latest news and views from the shooting world

NICE WHEELS

► **A unique partnership between John Rigby and Co.,** Kingsmen Editions and Traditional English Guncases (TEG), has resulted in a one-of-a-kind Land Rover Defender specially customised with Rigby features and bespoke details.

Brought together by their shared passion for quality, adventure and classic British design, these three brands have created a vehicle that is both beautiful and functional. Over six months, independent vehicle modifier Kingsmen Editions transformed a classic Defender 130 into every fieldsports enthusiast's dream 4x4. Finished in Keswick Green, the Rigby Land Rover is kitted out with a bespoke twin drawer system; one for Rigby guns and the other for hospitality, where bottles of bubbly and glasses can be stored. The vehicle also boasts a



The new Rigby Land Rover

270° pull-out awning, ideal for setting up an al fresco lunch wherever you are.

The bespoke Rigby interior is a mixture of canvas and leather with TEG having crafted the inlays for the gun cases and used those same high-quality materials to fabricate the luxurious interiors, including the seats and dashboard, adding an extra layer of elegant continuity and style.

Other special features include access to 25 litres of pressurized water, which

can be used for washing boots or a mucky pooch, a safari spotting seat big enough for two, a bespoke fit rifle rack and an exterior roll cage with a front light bar and twin rear spotlights.

For those interested in commissioning their own bespoke Rigby Land Rover, Kingsmen Editions offer full customization options according to budget and specifications, meaning each vehicle is truly unique to each customer.

www.johnrigbyandco.com

THIS MONTH ON

GUN MART TV

We have some exciting new content appearing on Gun Mart TV this month. The latest uploads include:

- **Savage 110**
Tactical review
- **BSA's new pellet line**
- **BSA Scorpion SE**
Tactical review
- **BSA Portable PCP Compressor (GX-E-CS3-1)** review
- **Diana 34 EMS break-barrel springer** review
- **Winchester 1895 lever-action** rifle review
- **FX Wildcat Mk1 Bullpup PCP** review
- **Savage Axis II Compact Vortex** Equipped review
- **Beginners guide to airguns part 5 - scopes**
- **Browning Maral HC Big Game** review

New videos are being added all the time so check out the channel: www.youtube.com/GunMartTV

BASC WARNING

► **The UK's largest shooting organisation, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC),** has warned that a significant drop in new entrants to the sport as a result of COVID-19 restrictions could impact the grassroots of shooting.

The warning comes on the back of the publication of Home Office statistics in England and Wales, which

show a significant decrease in new applications for firearms licences. The restrictions meant police forces only dealt with certain certificate grants, as home visits – a prerequisite to gaining a certificate – became non-essential.

The Home Office statistics show that new applications for firearm certificates and shotgun certificates were down



COVID-19 hits shooting's grassroots

37% and 42%, respectively between April 2020 and March 2021, equating to a total decrease of over 10,800 certificate holders compared to the previous year. As of March

2021, there were 548,521 shotgun certificates on issue, the lowest number since statistics were first recorded in their current form in 2009. www.basc.org.uk

PARTING **WAYS**

➤ **John Rothery Wholesale Co. Ltd** and Croots England have mutually brought their distribution agreement to an end. Allistair Croot of Croots England commented: "For the last 12 years we have worked with John Rothery Wholesale, who have distributed our brand to many of the UK retailers. I have to say how professional and enjoyable it has been to work with its whole team. Our direction of distribution has changed over the last few years resulting in the need for change.

All we can say is that if any brand needs distribution we would recommend John Rothery 100%. Jackie and I wish Bob, Cullen and Lesley all the very best."

Bob Rothery adds: "All good things come to an end. It has been a pleasure to help distribute and grow the Croots Brand to shooting retailers in the UK and we wish Allistair, Jackie Croot and their team all the best for the future". The distribution agreement comes to an end effective on 30th July 2021. www.bisley-uk.com

RELAUNCH

➤ **Charles Lancaster Gunmakers Ltd** is delighted to announce that its historic brand will be relaunching under new ownership. The new co-owners of the Charles Lancaster Group, George Juer (formerly of Purdey) and Tom Cosby (formerly of Atkin Grant & Lang and also of Purdey) have rolled their existing gun trade businesses into the new company. They will be joined on the Board by Francis Beardsworth and Margarita Booker, who have owned the Lancaster brand since the untimely passing of Margarita's late husband, the great riflemaker, Ronald Wharton.

The company is already manufacturing new 'best' grade guns and rifles under the Charles Lancaster name. Plans are in place for the relaunch of some of the more historic models synonymous with the company over the last 200 years, such as their world-famous bolt action rifle, the back action 'Wrist-Breaker', the 'Twelve-Twenty' and the 'Vertical Barrel Gun'. www.clguns.com

GREAT IDEA

➤ **Disposing of spent cartridge cases within the strict environmental laws that govern the disposal of plastic is the bane of many shoots.** That's why the British Game Alliance, in conjunction with Lincolnshire-based plastic waste recycling specialists Agri.Cycle, have formed an allegiance offering all shoots this season an easy way to have their spent cartridge cases collected and the subsequent plastic and metal components recycled.

Officially launched at The Game Fair, the new scheme provides the shoot with a BGA branded collection bag that fits around 21,000 cartridges, its collection by lorry from the shoot and the industrial recycling. Costing just £125, Agri.Cycle will donate a percentage to the BGA. Shoots not adhering to strict laws governing the disposal of spent cartridges could face a fine of up to £50,000 and/or a prison term.

A royal warrant holder, Agri.Cycle began farm plastic waste recycling in 2004. Managing director Robert Moore said he is delighted to announce this joint initiative with the BGA, which is supported by all the leading cartridge brands, such as Eley, Gamebore and Hull Cartridge. "As the country's leading spent shotgun cartridge



Image courtesy of Eley

recycler, we already recycle over two-thirds of the 230 million cartridges shot in the UK each year at our plant in Lincolnshire. With increasing pressure on the shooting industry to recycle, we are delighted to promote this initiative. We aim to collect from shoots in Feb/March and can cater for any size of shoot, offering bespoke packages with more bags." www.britishgamealliance.co.uk

QUICKFIRE

Are you a UK-based shooting club with news to spread? Important event dates? Announcements? Competitions won by members? Then let us know at editorialpr@gunmart.net and we'll let the rest of the shooting world know!

➤ More than 2,000 schoolchildren were treated to an upland educational experience during this year's Let's Learn Moor events. Talks and interactive presentations were provided by those who live and work in the uplands including gamekeepers, farmers, conservationists, local organisations and the emergency services. The project continues to offer local schools an unrivalled, free outdoor education experience. www.basc.org.uk

➤ The Gamekeepers Welfare Trust (GWT) has announced Ruth Karr has moved to the new role of Communications Manager. Ruth joined GWT as a volunteer in 2009 and in 2011 established their first social media presence with Facebook. Today the charity is active across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com

➤ West London Shooting School and Sportarm have teamed up with the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust to host a charity fundraising day to celebrate the Best of British Shooting, with all proceeds being donated to the charity. The event takes place on Thursday the 9th September 2021. www.shootingschool.co.uk

➤ BASC has described the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee inquiry into the Government's Animals Abroad Bill as a 'win for conservation'. The EFRA Select Committee's inquiry announced that they will look at the government's proposals on so-called 'trophy hunting' and whether the soon to be published Animals Abroad Bill will be effective in tackling cruelty to animals. www.basc.org.uk

KIT BOX

All the finest kit and caboodle for the seriously savvy shooter...

I Proper protection

► **The Bull Pup DX is designed for bull pup air rifles and incorporates all the proven Razorback technical features.** It comes with a 5-year limited warranty and a tough EVA shell construction with lateral load protection of up to 50kg.

Supplied in green bonded canvas, it's rain and abrasion-resistant. It features a bonded, flock-lined 5-layer

construction with extra duty main zip and a Grip-Lock carry handle, plus removable shoulder straps for easy and versatile transportation. Armour Flex provides scuff protection and is positioned on the mid panels, muzzle and butt areas.

It comes with offset harness fittings that can be completely removed when not required. Balance is maintained whilst leaving

The latest addition to the Napier RAZORBACK range of high-quality gun slips is now available

PRICE:
£124.99

both hands free when walking. The accessory pocket can hold spare magazines, ammo, the carry straps, a silencer and a bipod. It has an internal zipped compartment and tailored pouches to keep things in place.

Inside the bag, there are two wide retaining straps and a pocket to hold a single Napier VP90 sachet (supplied).
www.napieruk.com



I Some serious engraving

PRICE:
EPOA

► **Holland and Holland senior engraver, Kirsty Smith, has been given free licence to create a special engraving.** She has based her design on London trade routes, with the river Thames as a central element. The result is an incredible piece of artistry that blends different precious metals with her very skilled engraving, to create a unique and special gun.

The left lock shows a map of the London docks with gold eel, copper poppies, silver tea flower and mulberry flower. The right lock depicts Tower Bridge with the Tower of London and gold raven, plus ornament and flowers as per the left lock. The action base features a tea plant at the centre surrounded by ornaments, copper poppy flowers, a border with gold tea leaves and a map with gold meridian line. Further details can be found on the top lever, trigger guard and the left & right trunnion. **www.hollandandholland.com**



Holland and Holland unveil unique London trade Gun



*A trio of
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I Top Spec

► **The SWATCOM Active8 headset is a premier product that's designed to the highest specification, with the latest ASIC digital technology to ensure the best sound reproduction of any headset of its type.** They are totally submersible up to 1m for 30 minutes, include comfortable gel ear seals as standard and come with a 5-year manufacturers warranty covering the electronics. The product meets the demands of modern military soldiers, police first responders and professional shooters.

A number of accessories are available, including a Bluetooth neckloop, which allows the user to connect to a smartphone while using the headset, plus a detachable microphone that can be used to connect to a two-way radio or transceiver.

The SWATCOM Active8 is fast becoming the headset of choice for the world's top shooters. The company are a proud sponsor of the GB rifle team, the NRA (UK) and are a headline sponsor for the CPSA.

Rigby announces 'Nile' special edition Highland Stalker



PRICE FROM:
£24,950
+VAT

I The longest river

John Rigby & Co. has announced a stunning limited edition of its bolt-action Highland Stalker that pays homage to Africa's longest river and its iconic wildlife. Only 12 of the 'Nile' edition rifles, featuring premium materials, exclusive details and expert craftsmanship,

will be made. All will be in .300 Win Mag.

Like all Highland Stalker rifles, the 'Nile' editions are built on the renowned Mauser M98 action. Metal parts are adorned with crocodile skin engraving and their 25" barrels have a London Best black finish. Their deluxe

Turkish walnut stocks will be finished with crocodile-skin patterned leather recoil pads, and feature traditional rounded grips with hand-finished chequering. Three-position wing safeties allow for a variety of scope mounting options. Each rifle comes with its own limited

edition faux crocodile skin case and ivory accessories.

Rigby managing director Marc Newton commented: "This is a superbly practical plains game rifle with looks to match its performance. It will be as at home in Africa as the Nile crocodiles that inspired it."

The Cowboy Goes Tactical!



PRICE:
£354.95

I Yeehaw!

Launched in 2019, the Umarex Legends Cowboy rifle took the airgun world by storm! With its realistic shell ejecting action, not only did it appeal to the western-enthusiast but to anyone who enjoys a bit of garden tin can destruction.

Using two 12-gram CO2 capsules, it also proved to be economic and accurate.

2021 sees the range increase with the introduction of the Umarex Legends Cowboy Renegade. The realistic shell loading and ejecting remains but we now

see a tactical black synthetic stock, weaver rail for a red dot sight and a 1/2" UNF threaded muzzle for attaching a moderator. The oversized cocking lever also features a nice paracord wraparound, further highlighting the tactical feel of this new model.

The Legends Cowboy Renegade is in stock in the UK now! Contact your local retailer for further details on the Umarex Cowboy range or visit distributor John Rothery Wholesale's website where you can use its online dealer locator. www.bisley-uk.com

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WWW.BROWNING.EU

BEST ON TEST

Our experts bring you reviews of the top shooting products and services

Tetra VALUPRO III Rifle Cleaning Kit

➤ **Tetra Gun care products have a good reputation.**

Their VALUPRO III kit includes a cleaning rod, Phosphor bronze brush, plastic patch holder, 100% cotton cleaning patches, muzzle guide, gun grease and Triple Action bore cleaner. Each kit is calibre specific.

Spec

The cleaning rod shows a black gloss paint finish and consists of five pieces of steel rod that screw together via threaded male tips. The shorter last piece has the same thread but a female fixture, so brushes can be added. This is a universal 8-32 thread size but Tetra supply you with a brass cored Phosphor bronze brush and a small plastic patch holder with loop type patch attachment.

The blue rubberised grab handle allows the rod to rotate and is secured by a single circlip. There is also a bore guide that fits to the muzzle end but I will say it, all cleaning should be conducted from the rear, with a proper bore guide in place.

What else?

Some Tetra Care Triple Action solution comes in a squeezable 60ml bottle. It incorporates a cleaner, lubricant and protector. Its composition is made from a Fluoropolymer solution that penetrates and cleans in one action and is safe to



The Tetra gun cleaning products offer a complete gun care option for cleaning and maintenance



The VALUPRO III pack has a complete rifle care pack with calibre specific rod, bristle and patch loop

use on rifled bores. It is also safe to use on any non-metal surface, however, I would still wipe it off quickly if it contacts a wooden surface.

Also included is a 10-gram tube of Tetra Gun Grease, which reduces friction/wear, prevents corrosion, stops seizure in storage and helps the cleaning process. It's for use on metal surfaces only.



Square patches, triple action cleaner and gun grease offer a good clean for the barrel and offer clean maintenance

Cleaning routine

After fitting a bore guide, assemble the rod sections, checking they're all straight. Attach the Phosphor bronze brush and saturate it with Triple Action solution. Run the brush through 5-10 times, allowing it to exit cleanly each time so as not to twist the bristles. Next, remove the brush and replace it with the patch

holder, then loop the cleaning patch through the eyelet hole and run through the bore to remove any debris. Once this is done, pass through a Triple Action saturated patch several times and leave it for an hour to penetrate. I would then patch out again to see if any more copper, lead and carbon has been removed. If so, dry patch again and then soak the barrel one final time in the solution to leave a light coating for protection in storage.

The Tetra Grease is for use on bolts, behind the lugs, action rails, magazines etc. I found it did make some stainless-steel actions in particular run a little smoother. Be sure to work it into surfaces and wipe off any excess, plus it's also a good idea to spray another rust prevention layer over the area to further enhance protection.

Conclusion

I found the Triple Action of the Tetra worked well in my rifle's bore, removing much of a copper build-up and the baked-on carbon deposits. A couple of soakings and some dry patching was required but then again, I really like to keep my bores ultra clean. If storing your rifle with Triple Action applied, remember to dry patch through before doing any shooting. When I did this, the first round was never that far from the original zero. **AM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Tetra VALUPRO III Rifle Cleaning Kit

Price: £26.99

Contact: Highland Outdoors Ltd - www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk

REVIEWER: BRUCE POTTS

I Nockover Targets

➤ Fall flat, cord resettable metal targets are now the norm for both FT & HFT competition shooting and, of course, make superb practice aids for the airgun shooter. The standard kill-zone 'aperture' in the front of the target is 40mm, however, in some events, hitting the target is made more demanding as the 'kill-zone' is reduced in size to 25mm.

Nockover Targets now produce targets with a 15mm kill area and some with a reducer mechanism that can alter the regular 40mm zone to 25mm, and then to 15mm. All the models in the comprehensive range are manufactured from 3mm zinc-coated steel that's been laser cut into shape. The body profiles of these targets are bolted to 4 3/4" x 5 3/4" coated steel bases which include a hole at each corner, so that the whole unit can be secured to the ground. Four heavy-duty metal ground spikes are supplied, along with a winder/holder containing 50m of orange reset cord.

The workings

The mechanism that allows the target plate to fall is quite ingenious and over the years the company has developed



The Nockover Targets 15mm Rat and Multi-Hole Rook are amongst the company's most demanding airgun practice targets. (Inset) Note the articulated arm of the Nockover patented 'over centre' fall-flat mechanism

the working of it to be very reliable. Behind the 'kill-zone' (hole), in the front profile plate, is a red colour steel disc. This is at the top of a length of steel connected to the sturdy base and attached to the front/rear of the target by an articulated linkage. Heavy-duty locknuts and washers are used at the attachment points, so they're secure yet free to articulate. This is so when a pellet flies through the main kill-area and hits the red disc behind, the impact

sends it backwards, which in turn 'knocks' the front profile of the target backwards to fall-flat, signifying a 'hit'. To reset the target to its upright position, you simply pull the cord, which is attached to the front of the profile plate via a heavy-duty swivel and stainless-steel linkage.

At present, the company manufacture a rat and squirrel profile fall-flat target with the 15mm kill area, but also a couple of targets that can have the main 40mm kill-area reduced.

It's a bird

A very popular model is the 'Multi-Hole' Rook, which features a standard 40mm kill-zone hole. A moveable metal plate with a 25mm and 15mm hole drilled through it, is attached to the back of the main plate and can simply be rotated, allowing either 'aperture' to be used to reduce the kill-zone accordingly.

The company have a very comprehensive and diverse range of cleverly designed and ingenious targets available, even custom specials can be made to order. I highly recommend you check out their website for all the options. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: 15mm 'Kill-Zone' Rat and Multi-hole Rook Fall-Flat Targets

Prices: £24.60 and £27 respectively

Contact: Nockover Targets - www.nockover-targets.co.uk

REVIEWER: PETE WADESON



Wisport Ranger 30L Backpack

➤ The Ranger backpack is another quality product from Wisport and includes some well thought out features. With summer underway, if you are going to be carrying a backpack for extended periods you need something that is very comfortable and quick 'n easy to put on and take off.

Staying comfortable

This particular backpack has really nicely shaped and well-padded shoulder straps that sit well and stay in place, even when you are moving around. The air mesh padding stops sweat from building up under the straps, which can be a major irritation with some backpacks. It's also possible to carry the pack using just one strap reasonably comfortably, without it sliding off all the time. The back of the pack also features heavily padded breathable panels adding to the comfort of the carry.

The quick-release chest strap and the oversized removable waist strap are effective at keeping the Ranger from bouncing around. This makes carrying a full load in hot weather far less uncomfortable and irritating.

The insides

Space-wise, the Ranger has two large main compartments and a smaller front pocket, all easily accessible and featuring good quality zips. For added convenience, there are elasticated sleeve pockets on the sides of the pack, for quick and



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Wisport Ranger 30 Litre Backpack

Dimensions: 18.5"x11.8"x9.1" (approx)

Weight: 1225-grams

Price: £89.95

Contact: Military 1st - www.military1st.co.uk



Elasticated side pockets securely hold items you need quick access to



The thick air mesh straps work well in hot weather

The Wisport Ranger offers a very simple but extremely comfortable carry

easy access to drinks or binoculars, so you don't have to take the bag off and root around inside.

The Cordura material is very durable and, cleverly, they have applied a PU coating to the inside surfaces of the material, where it is less likely to wear off. This is to increase water resistance. There is also a rain cover included and it's stored in its own compartment at the bottom of the pack.

Front and side compression straps allow you to adapt the pack to the size and shape of what you are carrying, so nothing rattles and makes noise or shifts around to distract from the overall comfort of the carry. With minimal external attachment points, the relatively simple and snag-free outside of the bag means you are not likely to get hung up on anything.

Conclusion

This is a great backpack from Wisport and it comes with a 5-year manufacturer's guarantee, which shows just how much confidence they have in their product. It's a comfortable and simply laid out piece of kit that you can carry in all weathers, and despite it being well built, the pack itself is relatively light. Without the multiple external features and internal divisions that many backpacks offer, it's a basic, yet very useful, well-priced item. **AM**

REVIEWER:
MARK UNDERWOOD

I Sure Shot Gun Bag

➤ One area of the shooting sports that should never be overlooked is gun protection and Sure Shot Airguns has just launched their own gun bags for this very purpose. They are available in regular size or a large edition. The bags are constructed from highly durable 1000 Denier Cordura and there's a host of features too, which can make all the difference in use.

These gun bags have two large cargo pockets and each of these contain a further large velcro-sealed pouch, for safe storage of documents, ammunition and such like. Accessory straps run across the outer pockets, and the main carry handle,



all-importantly, runs seamed through the inside for strength.

The interior has a cosy feel to it, with one side featuring straight padding and the other an attractive as well as functional quilted design. Three straps are included to keep the gun securely fastened in position, and with the addition of shoulder straps and even backpack straps - all bases are covered.

On show here is the regular size. The large option is extra deep and designed to take large rifle/scope combinations, such as specialized FT rigs. All in all, a well thought out product. **GM**

REVIEWER:
MARK CAMOCCIO

PRICE:
£80.00



(Top) Sure Shot's Gun bag has a host of features (Middle) Concealed pockets inside the side pouches are a handy feature (Bottom) Note the interior straps and a good level of padding



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Sure Shot Gun Bags

Colours: Black or Olive Green

Sizes: Regular 41.5x12" and Large 49.2x15.7"

Prices: £80 & £85 respectively

Contact: Sure Shot Airguns - www.sureshot-airguns.co.uk

I Webley Pro-Tilt Fully Adjustable Bipod

➤ The Webley Pro-Tilt Bipods are not exactly what you could call the 'new kids on the block' but due to their usefulness and upgraded design, they are just as relevant now as they were when the original models were first launched.

They are well manufactured using heat-treated steels and hard alloys, plus feature a hard-black anodised finish. The tilting base section attaches to a standard forend sling swivel stud by two 'lugged arms' that extend upwards through the base. Tightening the knurled thumbscrew underneath then draws the bipod base up to sit flush with the underside of the stock.

The bipod's tilt/cant facility allows for instant levelling. To prevent the whole unit from 'flopping around' when the rifle is being carried,

there's a 'Tilt Screw Lock' at the rear of the base. This can also be used to adjust the tension of the tilt facility.

The legs are infinitely adjustable along their length of travel due to the press-in Lock Release Catches. The adjustable spring-tensioned legs also have generously sized rubber feet, which allow for a very sure stance on any terrain.

The legs lockout in the open or closed position by using external springs sheathed by highly effective 'Noise Reducing Spring Covers'. These thick rubber sleeves not only protect the springs from the elements and getting clogged up with mud and debris, but significantly reduce any potential noise during operation. **GM**

REVIEWER: PETE WADESON

The Webley Pro-Tilt Fully Adjustable Bipod is well manufactured, light, quick to deploy and easy to use



PRICE:
£52.99

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Webley Pro-Tilt Fully Adjustable Bipod

Sizes: 6-9" or 9-13"

Price: £52.99 & £55.99 respectively

Contact: Highland Outdoors - www.hilandoutdoors.co.uk

Air Arms Q-Tec Silencer

> Silencers are a popular accessory for a variety of reasons, but their effect on down range performance isn't always a foregone conclusion. Whilst they can make some difference to the down range report of a spring-powered airgun, with so much mechanical noise from the action to consider, the end result is often quite disappointing. However, where the use of silencers/moderators really makes a difference is when they are fitted to pre-charged pneumatics.

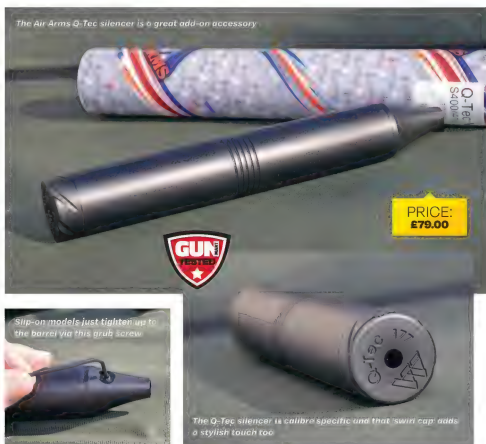
Technology at play

Air expansion and airflow dynamics are actually surprisingly complex subjects, and Air Arms' new Q-Tec Silencer is the result of some serious research. The result is not only aesthetically pleasing but quite dramatic where it matters - in the field. Fluid dynamics and simulation systems were utilized in the development process, and the end result is nothing if not impressive.

The design

The new model is calibre specific, whereby the path through the silencer body is made so it is just a fraction larger than the diameter of the pellet itself. This ensures that the majority of spent air is captured and dissipated efficiently through the unit, rather than allowed to escape unrestrained behind the pellet. The design sees the pellet exit the barrel, enter a 'still air' chamber, then pass through a series of five baffles, and finally exit the unit in as unruffled a manner as possible.

The maximum sound reduction is the aim, and



in the Q-Tec, I think the company has largely achieved their goal. Air Arms claim that the Q-Tec is some 10.92% quieter than the market leader, and whilst I wasn't able to validate this with any scientific equipment on test, I was able to compare the new model alongside several rivals and an earlier Air Arms factory moderator. It was here

that the Q-Tec proved not only impressively muted alongside, but an obvious outright winner.

A low reflection, super hard-wearing matt black finish is highly practical. Couple that with the Air Arms signature 'swirl' end cap, and what we have here is a super-efficient silencer, that not only works superbly, but really looks the part.

A good job

Exhaustive testing has ensured that accuracy is only enhanced, (certainly not compromised in any way) and with many competition shooters as well as hunters switching back to silencers these days, Air Arms should be well placed to take advantage of the trend.

The silencer is available as a slip-on unit for certain models and is secured by tightening a 5mm Allen headed screw. Alternatively, they can be specced with a 1/2" UNF male or female thread, so there should be a Q-Tec for not only Air Arms' own customers, but owners of many other makes of airgun too. **am**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Air Arms Q-Tec Silencer
Weight: 60z
Length: 8.6"
Diameter: 1.25"
Available in: .177, .22 and .25
Thread Sizes: 1/2" UNF male and female
Options: Slip-Fit for S410, S400, S200 & TDR
Price: £79
Contact: Air Arms - www.air-arms.co.uk

REVIEWER:

MARK CAMOCCIO

Second-hand books

For anyone who enjoys reading up on shooting, there is a huge library of information sitting on the second-hand bookshelves at Henry Krank & Co. They cover everything from classic English shotguns to European armour and military strategy.

There are books on reloading and gun care and several on gunsmithing techniques. It's impossible to list here all of the subjects covered in this great 'information centre' but there is undoubtedly something for everyone. If you collect older airguns for example, a five-minute root through the shelves revealed half a dozen books on the subject, some of which date back to the 1950s.

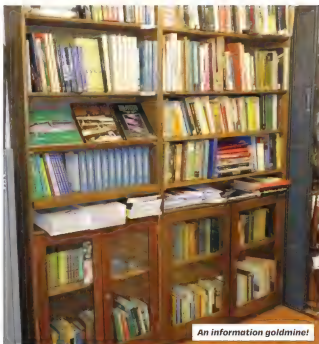
All of the books are individually priced and the condition is generally very good. Around 250 of the books

are listed on the Henry Krank website with brief descriptions and prices. If you want to see the full selection, then it's well worth going into the shop. It's a good job they don't have a comfy couch, otherwise, you could spend the whole day reading!

These books are a valuable resource and it's good to see that Kranks are keeping them in circulation, rather than them being relegated to the recycling bin. They need to be saved otherwise old techniques and technical data could be lost forever.

Looking for a source of shooting-related information? Then give the staff at Henry Kranks a call to see what they've got. **GM**

REVIEWER:
MARK UNDERWOOD



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Second-hand books

Price: Books priced individually

Contact: Henry Krank - www.henrykrank.com

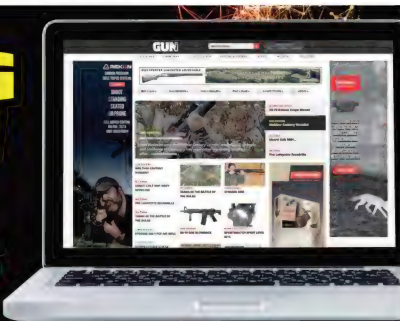
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Jack Pyke Ashcombe Pullovers



PRICE:
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In the Jack Pyke Ashcombe range of pullovers, there's a style or design to suit everybody and all are incredibly well priced

At the risk of stating the obvious, clothing is quite easy to categorise, especially as we all know what constitutes an outdoor jacket as we do the requirements for suitable outdoor trousers. However, when it comes to shirts and pullovers (not including fleeces) it's very much a case of 'a jumper is a jumper' you could say or pullover! Okay, a tad sarcastic, but shirts and pullovers do get overlooked. Some see them purely as casual wear and more often than not in the outdoor clothing industry, it can also be a case of, they conform to what is deemed the traditional country look. While Jack Pyke certainly has many garments that fit this bill, the Ashcombe range of pullovers breaks with the norm as they fall firmly in what can be termed as smart casual wear.

The range includes a Crewknit, V-Neck and a Zipknit design and thankfully being manufactured from 100% lambswool, they all provide comfort and warmth. Another standout feature is they show the company commitment to quality. They're of a medium

weight with contrasting detail on the neck and cuffs and are ideal for any outdoor pursuit or leisure activity. However, while two are quite standard in design, the unusually termed 'Zipknit' is quite interesting due to the zip neck giving it the obvious

attribute of temperature regulation. Also, the high knitted ribbed collar/neck gives an extra and useful amount of protection from the elements, thus making this particular option far handier to use as a layer under a heavy or light waterproof jacket.

To sum up, these are good quality tops at an incredibly reasonable price and there's a style or specific design that'll suit many outdoor and active leisure uses. **AM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Ashcombe Crewknit, V-Neck and Zipknit Pullovers
Sizes: S-3XL
Colours: Green, Barley and Navy
Price: £39.95 for any style
Contact: Jack Pyke of England - www.jackpyke.co.uk

REVIEWER: PETE WADSON



Harkila Pro Hunter Ledge GTX Hunting Boots

Amongst their extensive range of clothing and shooting accessories, Harkila also has a comprehensive choice of footwear. Indeed, the name Pro Hunter will already be familiar to many as it's a term we've come to associate with various items of their attire.

Model footwear

The Pro Hunter Ledge GTX measure 8 ½" at the front, dropping to 7" at the rear (shank) and are of a build that flexes, yet gives full support and protection to the ankle and lower calf area. Manufactured from full-grain leather, they also feature a well-padded 2.2mm warm and durable Nubuck leather upper, plus they're installed with a very high quality, fully waterproof, windproof and breathable Gore-Tex Ultimate membrane. It's worth noting that this particular membrane is stronger and more hardwearing than previous Gore-Tex versions and that Harkila is the first company to bring it to the market.

Although the rugged build of the footwear is clear to see, the boots are also extremely comfortable, aided by the ultra-durable lining and padding in key areas, including the contrast side panels, upper and heel support.



PRICE:
£259.99

These hunting boots are robust, tough, surprisingly lightweight and very comfortable

Lacing system

The well-padded tongue has a wide throat for ease of putting on/off, while the lacing system comprises of 4-pairs of captive, articulating D-rings that stop at the lower part of the ankle, where your ankle moves as you move. A pair of open metal hasp fasteners are set back from the others, so the boot can be drawn securely to the foot, then two more pairs of open hasp retainers take you up to the top. There's also an open metal hasp at the centre of the tongue to help retain its position and evenly distribute lace tension. The boots also include strong pull

loops at the rear, plus a steel eye for attaching gaiters, to prevent wear to the laces.

Down below

The robust outer build transfers down to the very thick and deep cut semi-stiff Vibram XS Trek Rubber compound sole unit, which is also fitted with a very generous rand. Such is the design that it offers a

very high level of all-around protection due to it running fully around the front toe section, where it also creates a strong toe buffer. It also rises up at the back to strengthen and fully protect the heel area.

The boots also feature a shock-absorbing midsole, for extra wearer comfort. The specialised Vibram Campos sole pattern combines to ensure solid footing and traction on a wide variety of terrain, while the enhanced flexing action offers a high level of comfort.

Conclusions

The Pro Hunter Ledge GTX are robust, tough, surprisingly lightweight and very comfortable to wear, making them suitable for a wide variety of hunting and outdoor activities. As for the price, top quality costs and if you take your hunting seriously then you'll require some serious kit. When it comes to footwear, if you try to scrimp, your feet will surely let you know. **AM**

REVIEWER: PETE WADSON

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Harkila Pro Hunter Ledge GTX Hunting Boots (Ochre)

Price: £259.99

European Sizes: 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 & 48

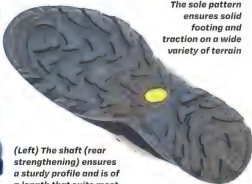
Contact: Harkila - www.harkila.com



The generous rand offers a very high level of all-round protection



(Left) The shaft (rear strengthening) ensures a sturdy profile and is of a length that suits most hunters and outdoorsman



The sole pattern ensures solid footing and traction on a wide variety of terrain



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RAW Pedigree

PRICE:
£2149.00



Mark Camoccio gets his hands on a serious piece of equipment from Rapid Air Weapons; the HM1000X

Today's airgun market has shown that enthusiasts are prepared to pay for classy high-end kit that delivers. Take a good look at the rifle on show here and an array of subtle features stand out, but hold on just a minute, doesn't it all look rather familiar?

Lineage

Rapid Air Weapons (RAW) was set up in the USA by Martin Rutterford, a former director of the Theoben brand. In the UK, Theoben were still trading, but eventually hit problems, had to be bought out and became Impact Airguns, which is now sadly no more. However, RAW has flourished, carving out a niche sector of the market for its premium hardware.

I have a soft spot for the brand too since my current competition gun just happens to be an old Impact GSX600, which whilst having been customized by Airmasters, is built around much the same chunky action configuration. Same direct feed and same trigger blade.

Lairy

What you see here is the very latest RAW HM1000X, specified in 12 ft/lbs. The eye-catching laminate stock can be ordered in red, black, blue, yellow, and light tan. Undeniably lairy, but for the army of enthusiasts who appreciate the technical stability that laminate represents, it's clearly 'the way to go'!

At £2149, this RAW falls fairly and squarely into the 'supergun' bracket, yet you get a host of features built-in. An adjustable cheek piece and butt section come as standard, plus there's also an accessory rail, manometer, in-guard safety catch, 2-stage match trigger, regulated action, Foster quick fill valve, silencer, shrouded barrel, side-lever cocking, 480cc buddy bottle and 17-shot magazine!

Visuals

First impressions are always interesting and whilst the fit and finish on show here are near immaculate, reactions from my mini straw poll were fully mixed over the woodwork. Whilst it's difficult to deny it does the job, the styling just seems a little vague, around the pistol grip for one and also the shape of the comb, with perhaps more definition needed. I'm talking aesthetics here, rather than any deficiency in

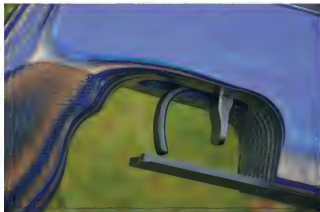
handling, and where the grip is concerned, 'ambi' credentials, I appreciate, dictate play.

Crisp, pin perfect laser-cut chequering always helps and the configuration overall, feels fully supportive. Look to the underside and there's an accessory rail, and whilst I would prefer a more standard, ISU open rail, this 'M-LOK' design still offers plenty of anchor points.

The carbon fibre barrel shroud looks the part and mates well with the matte black coating applied to the robust-looking action. The Picatinny rail on top adds to the solid feel and with the threaded barrel capped off with a compact Tanto silencer (supplied as standard), the HM1000X is ready to roll from the off.

It's a set-up

Before taking to the field, the RAW first needs an air intake, to fill its sizeable 480cc buddy bottle. In the interests of safety,



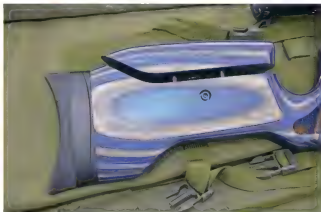
Detail of the 2-stage trigger and 'in-guard' safety catch



The chassis stock option will appeal to many



Accuracy on test was top notch!



The height of the cheek piece can be altered via an Allen bolt

it always pays to check the fill pressure with pneumatics and I'm assured by the factory Stateside, that this model is happy at 250bar. Given that you'll get around 450 shots from a charge, it will probably pay to fill to a lower figure in practice, simply as less stress is placed on components over time. For my test period, I filled to the max.

The rifle comes with a 17-shot magazine in .177 calibre, which is hardly surprising, since it was Theoben who originally popularized magazine-fed airguns, with their now legendary Rapid 7 model. The mag here is similar to the original design and it's easy to fill.

Just before the action starts, with a scope bolted in place, it's time to tweak those stock features. Both rely on a single Allen bolt, simply slacken it off and raise or lower either the cheek piece or butt pad. We are talking correct gun-fit here, so don't rush the process. When eye/scope

alignment is spot on, gently tighten the bolts and zeroing can begin.

Overall feel

So how does this HM1000X feel to shoot? Well, as I mentioned at the start, I use an Impact GSX600, with similar characteristics as this RAW, and one big disadvantage of that gun, as beautiful as it is, is the absurdly proud cocking bolt. Cycling the slick side-lever on the HM1000X is, to be honest, an exercise in subtle engineering and refinement, as pulling the lever back requires very little effort, given the short arc of movement.

One negative observation during the test concerned the magazine, which I have to say, wasn't the smoothest I've ever used, in terms of occasional mild resistance when cycling the system, but this will depend on pellets used of course.

Take a close look at that breech though and you'll notice the chunky action is relieved on both sides to accommodate single-shot loading,

which, incidentally, is a process I had Airmasters undertake on my Impact. Just trip the side-lever gently open and a pellet can be chambered directly into the barrel. You can feel an overly tight or slack pellet by doing this, which always helps maximise results down range. More subtlety comes with the articulated pellet probe and just watching it return to a close, is a satisfying business.

Trigger wise, this is the same profile components/trigger blade and safety tab, as my Impact. Whilst they may look fairly basic on a gun of this price, I can assure you that, as someone obsessed with match triggers, they deliver on all counts. I can see some individuals understandably bemoaning the lack of an adjustable blade, but the saving grace here is the pleasing blade shape, plus the set-back positioning. It suits me perfectly, but this is perhaps an area where try before you buy, is the best policy.

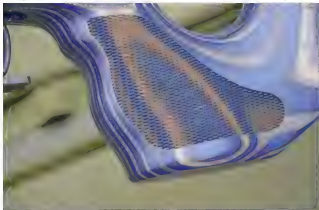
Trigger release is superbly light and predictable and I, believe me, am rather fussy in this area.

Range book

The massive carbon fibre buddy bottle, coupled with the prescribed high fill pressure, means you won't be running out of firepower anytime soon. The action, as mentioned, is regulated, so I opted to test the top of the charge over the chronograph, to gauge consistency. A total spread of just 17 FPS (over 100



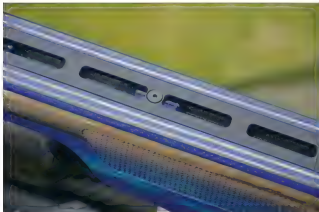
Here you can see details of the shrouded barrel, silencer and 480cc buddy bottle



Detail of the laser chequering on the grip



The side-lever is particularly subtle, note the Picatinny rail for scope mounting



The underside of the forend shows M-LOK attachment points

shots) using Webley Mosquito pellets, was a satisfying start to the proceedings. Next, it was time to check accuracy down range.

I'm always aware that this grade of rifle demands a more stringent test, so after first zeroing the optics, I settled for groupings at 45 yards. If you look at the clusters, in relation to the 1p coin in the photo, you'll get some idea. Groups that measure sub 5p piece, get the thumbs up from me.

Chassis option

Now here's a thing. If you like what you see with this RAW, but laminate isn't your thing, if you fancy a more tactical look, then there is always the option of the HM1000X chassis. This comes with a slim-line aluminium ventilated front chassis and rear bar, from which come synthetic sections. There's an AR15-style drop-down grip, an adjustable cheek piece on a riser mechanism (complete with finger wheel control) and also an extendable rubber butt section; this time with push-button control.

Pedigree

As mentioned, this model is 12 ft/lbs here, but these

premium machines can be specified in FAC, in .22, .25, .30 and possibly other calibres. FAC variants get polygon barrels too, a feature that takes into account users of the new and emerging slug ammunition. They also feature an adjustable regulator, which is an attribute that is proving increasingly popular of late, with high power airguns.

New UK distributors, Elite Optical, are keen to stress the family history with Theoben, and the plan apparently, is to bring in other models, such as the TM1000 Target rifle. The RAW brand remains very much handmade in small numbers, so there may be time lags here. Stocks are manufactured in the USA too, by a company called AB (American Built), and it's the supply chain that Elite are keen to streamline.

One thing for sure, Rapid Air Weapons are in a good place at the moment, with high demand, and appreciation for the pedigree products on offer. The HM1000X may represent a significant outlay but the build quality, feel and function, plus the end performance, are immensely satisfying. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Rapid Air Weapons HM1000X
Type: Regulated hunting/competition PCP
Calibre: .177 on test, .22 available
Weight: 8.2lbs
Length: 39" (including silencer)
Barrel: 16"
Stock: Laminate adjustable sporter
Trigger: Match grade 2-stage unit
Fill Pressure: 250 bar
Shot Count: 400 (guide)
Energy: 11 ft/lbs (average on test)
Price: £2149
Options: Chassis Version £1949
Contact: Elite Optical - www.eliteoptical.co.uk



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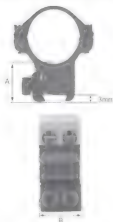
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GM09 21/13/11



This time it's serious!

Mark Camoccio checks out the range of new pellets from BSA

I'm a big fan of the modern BSA operation, and an energized marketing and design team has really seen the famous old brand define its place in the market over the last couple of decades.

But any honest assessment has to conclude that quality ammunition has not really been associated with BSA over any of that time. Obvious links with the Gamo stable haven't helped the cause, and whilst they produce a remarkable range of pellets, very few have made the grade for enthusiasts pushing for top class results. As for the Red Star and Blue Star brands from BSA themselves, 'rather disappointing', is a carefully chosen understatement for the occasion!

Get serious!

Indeed, given the quality of the hardware now leaving the famous factory, BSA deserved better, and I'm pleased to say that they have now well and truly seen the light. For this new range of pellets are about to hit a gunshop near you and

having had a serious dabble with them, I have been left properly impressed.

Let's start by saying they are precision made in Germany by a famous ammunition maker, to extremely high standards and tolerances, so we are now talking top-class ammo here. There are four different pellet designs in the line-up, so before I delve deeper, a quick overview of what to expect with each is perhaps in order.

BSA Goldstar

This is arguably the flagship pellet since it is aimed at outdoor competition HFT/ FT shooters. It's a medium-weight pellet, designed for maximum accuracy down range. Of course, it's equally applicable to hunting, the flat trajectory is a big advantage. Dome headed, supremely aerodynamic, with apparently plenty of penetration too. Made from a special mix of lead alloy, it is also designed for minimal barrel fouling.

.177 | 4.52mm | 8.64-grains | BC 0.021

.22 | 5.53mm | 14.66-grains | BC 0.019

BSA Blackstar

This is a heavyweight hunting pellet with a rounded hollow point shape, designed to be aerodynamic, yet hit hard, with superior penetration. The hollow nose means the pellet will deform on impact, imparting maximum energy to the quarry. A smooth exterior helps airflow.

.177 | 4.5mm | 10.49-grains | BC 0.023

.22 | 5.5mm | 18.21-grains | BC 0.026



L-R: Goldstar, Silverstar, Blackstar and Greenstar



Results were excellent



Tin alloy - a sign of things to come?



All the new pellets are available in .177 or .22

BSA Silverstar

This is a fairly lightweight pellet (especially in .177) intended for medium range hunting. The elaborate nose configuration here features a hollow point and central spike, again intended for high impact, expansion and penetration. A tapered tip assists the end result, which should be high deformation on impact.

.177 | 4.5mm | 7.25-grains | BC 0.016
.22 | 5.5mm | 16.36-grains | BC 0.020

BSA Greenstar

And so we come to the Greenstar, which as its name suggests, is environmentally friendly (being lead-free). The low mass translates into high-velocity and a relatively flat trajectory too. These pellets are formed from a special tin alloy, and as such, there should be no fouling in the barrel. The manufacturers specify they are suitable for both competition as well as hunting, plus with apparently high impact and penetration, these shiny projectiles are certainly worth a try.

.177 | 4.5mm | 6.64-grains | BC 0.013
.22 | 5.5mm | 12.96-grains | BC 0.029

Initial weight check

So, we've established that this new range of pellets hails from a top German ammunition manufacturer, where quality is assured, but I was still keen to run a check, and hand weigh a sample of each – just to gauge weight consistency and see all was as it should be. 20 pellets of each were weighed, with the results (rounded to nearest .1-grain) as follows:

Goldstar .177 (8.64-grains)	8.7	8.8	8.9
No. of pellets	15	5	
Blackstar .177 (10.49-grains)	10.4	10.5	10.6
No. of pellets	10	8	2
Silverstar .177 (7.25-grains)	7.2	7.3	7.4
No. of pellets	2	9	9
Greenstar .177 (6.64g-grains)	6.7	6.8	
No. of pellets	19	1	

In conclusion, all four pellets were admirably consistent, with the Goldstars within one-tenth of a grain, and the Greenstar proving near identical. Very impressive. You really won't notice a tenth of a grain variation either way in any case, as far as accuracy goes, believe me!

Accuracy

BSA loaned me a Scorpion SE Tactical to use for the accuracy evaluation and it proved remarkably responsive with all four pellets. I shot over 30 yards since this is perhaps a favourite hunting distance and a minimum challenge for this grade of ammo.

The weakest results were produced by the Blackstar (hollow nose), yet these still printed sub 1/2" groups. The Goldstar loved the BSA barrel and were superbly accurate, with near single hole clusters. Similar with the Silverstar, with sub 1/4" groups easy to come by. For me though, the biggest revelation came with the Greenstar tin alloys and these banged in easy 1/4" clusters too, with minimal fuss. Since these may well represent the future, as we get squeezed to ease lead from our grasp, the results are at least encouraging.

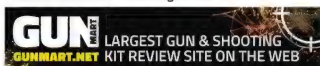
Barrel compatibility is of course key with any pellet testing but one thing is for sure, I can certainly vouch for the quality on offer here. All the types look precision formed and the results speak volumes for the pedigree operation behind the scenes.

If you are thinking of running your own tests, then BSA's premium pellet sampler packs are the ideal solution. They include a quantity of each pellet type in the pack. www.bsaguns.co.uk

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BSA Goldstar Pellets .177/4.52mm/8.64-grain/ 500pcs RRP £10.50
BSA Goldstar Pellets .22/5.53mm/14.66-grain/ 500pcs RRP £12.50
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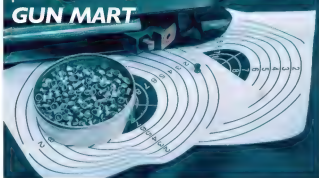
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Pete Wadeson gives credit to the Weihrauch HW80KS

When I first began shooting air rifles, you could count on one hand the rifles youngsters, like myself, aspired to own. We didn't have the comprehensive selection that's available today and we certainly couldn't afford a PCP. It might sound bizarre, but back then, one of the air rifles to own was the Weihrauch HW80 and/or the HW80K.

Back in the day, custom gunsmiths like Venom chose this rifle and other Weihrauchs, like the HW77/77K, to tune and modify until quite frankly, they became for that era - superguns. The HW80/80K is a classic and a legendary springer that was once thought to be the ultimate air rifle for knocking down live quarry. Its appeal was boosted by it once being advertised as 'The Powerhouse.' In actuality, it wasn't any more powerful than any other good quality 12 ft/lbs legal limit air rifle available at the time, but it lived up to its other reported attributes of being very robust, reliable and in the right hands, accurate.

Enough already

Since its launch, this airgun has only had a few slight changes, mainly to the stock, which was given a 'Monte Carlo' style cheek piece. However, when Weihrauch developed their top-performing 'HE' (High Efficiency) sound moderator for their very first multi-shot PCP, the uber-popular HW100, we saw some of their popular mechanical models having their barrel's screw cut and being offered with the company's silencer already screwed on up-front.

Most I've previously tested, so which model is still high on the list in relation to popularity? Well, the HW95KS and HW90S are sure-fire contenders for those looking to hunt with a mechanical action air rifle.

But for classic rifle status and sheer pedigree, the HW80K with a silencer or as it's now termed the 'HW80KS', is still one that can't and shouldn't be ignored.

Sleeker

The ambidextrous, dark brown stained beech wood stock is now far sleeker in

profile than the original and that once high cheekpiece has also now been altered. The stock now sports a full, yet medium height cheekpiece with a brown rubber butt pad and black line spacer. It's worth mentioning that like many Weihrauchs, the configuration of the aft section is designed in a way that the butt sits wonderfully well in the shoulder, so no worries over shoulder fit or (for the average person) reach to pull. However, aftermarket setback trigger blades are readily available from various sources if required, so even this is a nuance that can be personalised to the shooter's personal preference.

The pistol grip has also been modified, feeling less 'deep' than its predecessors and it's also acquired a shallower rake. A design some will appreciate but I feel equally as many, especially those such as myself who have had experience of older models of '80', will find a tad unusual but not impossible to quickly get used to.

Deep-cut chequering is now applied to the grip. There are two large



The ambidextrous stock sports a medium height cheek piece with a brown rubber butt pad and black line spacer

Weihrauch's 'HE' silencer does a fine job of taming muzzle report, plus it negates muzzle flip



The breech uses a large wedge shaped detente lock and chunky breech seal to ensure an airtight seal



The Rekord 2-stage trigger unit with auto safety is excellent



An optic fitted in medium height mounts is the optimum choice to gain a comfortable head position

panels set on either side and while the relatively lengthy slab-sided forend still retains a nicely curved underside, it's still bereft of any such grip aid. I mention this because the HW99S now has chequering on the forend, so I found this omission a tad strange. However, during testing, I didn't feel the stock lacking in this department because it handles and balances so well that you're not continually searching for a sure leading handhold. Also, as it weighs in at a healthy 8.9lbs un-scoped, with the weight being felt slightly more towards the forward section of the stock, this also helps the rifle feel more secure in your leading hand.

Unlike the standard and carbine variants, the HW80KS omits open sights. Now, you might think someone such as me who's been brought up shooting open sighted air rifles would be the first to criticise the rifle for this but it's not an issue. The reason being, you can purchase the other versions of the rifle. Also, Weihrauch has developed an 'HE' silencer that's specifically

designed to fit the HW77 and 77K model as an optional extra without affecting the sightline of the rifle's 'irons'.

Cut down

Although the barrel has been shortened to 12.2" (approximately 2" less than the carbine variant) with the added length of the silencer it's still rather lengthy. However, the silencer doubles up as a useful cocking aid and the rifle unlatches at the breech very easily, plus doesn't take as much 'heft' to cock due to the extra leverage the silencer offers. Not wanting to overly dwell on length, due to the silencer being quite long, the rifle has an overall length of 44.8", so it's definitely what you'd term an adult-sized air rifle. However, when suitably scoped up it doesn't feel unwieldy in the hold as an appropriate optic brings the weight back towards the shooter and is felt in a more central position.

At the end of the cocking stroke, you can feel the quality of the German engineering as the trigger sears engage very positively and the familiar

automatic safety button pops out from the rear/left of the air cylinder. The breech uses a large, wedge-shaped detente lock and chunky breech seal to ensure an airtight lockup once you've thumbled a pellet directly into the breech and returned the barrel to the closed position.

Incidentally, as there's no anti-beartrap mechanism, it can be decocked if required by simply pushing the safety button in while holding the barrel in the cocked position, then squeeze the trigger and allow the barrel to return (under control of your hold) to the closed position.

This scope-only rifle has quite a lengthy run of deep, well-cut dovetails, with the addition of three arrestor holes to prevent scope creep. Now, it was while scoping up that I became aware of the change in height of the cheekpiece. The reason being, I initially fitted a scope with a 50mm objective lens in high mounts, and to obtain correct eye-scope alignment my head was just touching the top of the comb.



The Weihrauch HW80KS is a solid air rifle and shouldn't be overlooked

The slab-sided forend has a rounded underside, is relatively lengthy and is in perfect proportion to the rest of the rifle

"the rifle's proven pedigree comes from being a rugged, reliable, no-nonsense sporter, plus its inherent high level of accuracy"

To combat this I fitted a sensibly sized, general specced scope in medium height mounts. This suited the rifle and made the combo feel far more comfortable in the aim. After setting a 25 yard zero, I was soon printing 5/8" groups. Pushing out to 35 yards, the rifle was still capable of making kill-zone size groupings using quality ammo.

Obviously, the legendary Rekord trigger unit aids accuracy. It's a 2-stage, fully adjustable mechanism that is still classed by many as the industry standard by which other similar trigger mechanisms for a springer are judged. The nicely curved steel blade is ridged at the front to give a more positive trigger feel and releases shot after shot without a hint of creep.

Recoil is certainly lower than on older models and is felt as a slight nudge in the shoulder. There's some internal mechanical noise on discharge but the company's

HE silencer does a fine job of reducing the muzzle report.

Conclusion

There's now a very wide selection of springers available with integral silencers fitted and equally as many available with standard 1/2" UNF screw cut muzzles to accept a can of choice. So, although one of the main selling points of the HW80KS is the addition of the HE Silencer, it has to be remembered the rifle's proven pedigree comes from being a rugged, reliable, no-nonsense sporter, plus its inherent high level of accuracy. The stock is another feature that deserves praise as the rifle feels better in the hold than the early models.

I think some will feel Weihrauch could have shortened the barrel far more than they have, especially as the trend is now leaning towards

shorter air rifles. It would give it a more general appeal as well as help with handling characteristics and of course the ability to use it in enclosed areas. It would also enhance the overall ergonomics of the gun, which for some would be a deal-breaker. But that's for others to consider as the Weihrauch HW80KS is a solid, robust rifle based on a layout that's more than stood the test of time, and with the addition of such a highly effective silencer, it's definitely a man-size springer that shouldn't be overlooked by the airgun hunter who prefers the traditional. **AM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Weihrauch HW80KS

Type: Break-Barrel

Stock: Beech wood sporter

Overall Length: 44.8"

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Price: From £949

Contact: BSA Guns - www.basaguns.co.uk

➤ Available in four dedicated right or left-hand configurations, the stock options are Walnut, Realtree Camo, Black and Black Pepper Laminate. All feature a high rollover cheek piece, height-adjustable black rubber butt pad, slim neck, thumb shelf and a steep drop-down pistol grip. The forend is thickset and shows a semi-Schnabel tip. The removable 200cc buddy bottle has a neat inlet valve port on the underside of the stock, adjacent to its air pressure gauge. A 232bar charge gives 190 shots in .177 calibre and 250 in .22 or 25. The 'CCS' (Customer Configured Shroud) with 'integral primary suppression unit', can be removed if you only require the front silencer supplied. A generous cocking bolt at the rear runs the upgraded 10-shot removable magazine. The 2-stage adjustable, 'match grade' trigger has a blade and shoe configuration. A manual safety lever is positioned top right of the action block. The air regulator provides impressive shot-to-shot consistency throughout the charge.



PRICE:
£440.00

GAMO COYOTE

Price: £440

Contact: BSA Guns - www.bsaguns.co.uk

➤ The ambidextrous beech wood (synthetic tactical option available) stock features a well-defined cheek piece and a ventilated rubber butt pad. The forend is relatively slim and has two panels of 'skip-line' chequering set on either side, while the grip shows large, contoured panels on either side. The air reservoir has a forward-facing air gauge (manometer) and a fill of 232bar gives approximately 90 shots in .177 and 110 in .22 calibre. The teardrop cocking bolt runs a 10-shot self-actuating magazine that sits deep in a recessed loading well and is held in place by magnets. The 'SAT2' denoted trigger mechanism is a 2-stage, adjustable unit with an in-guard manual safety blade. Its cold hammer-forged barrel is strengthened by a barrel band, while the ½" UNF screw cut muzzle for optional silencer is protected by a ported cover cap.



PRICE:
£399.00

KRAL PUNCHER

Price: £399

Contact: Range Right Ltd - www.range-right.co.uk

➤ The ambidextrous Turkish walnut stock has a high cheek piece, slim neck, drop-down pistol grip and a ventilated rubber butt pad. The slab-sided forend ends with a semi-Schnabel tip. Two panels of chequering are set on either side of the pistol grip and three on either side of the fore section. A fill of 200bar gives approximately 120 shots in .177 and 140 in .22, plus there's an air gauge in the underside of the stock. The barrel is supported by a barrel band and the ½" screw cut muzzle will accept a silencer of choice. A sidelever cocking mechanism runs an auto-indexing, 12-shot/.22 or 14-shot/.177 removable magazine. There is a removable pair of Hi-Viz open sights and a power adjuster dial, which is only 'applicable' on FAC rated models. The 2-stage, adjustable trigger unit has a manual rocker-style safety lever positioned on the right of the action block.



PRICE:
£930.00

WEIHRACH HW100KTS

Price: £930

Contact: Hull Cartridge - www.weihrach.co.uk

➤ This variant of their acclaimed '100' series has an ambidextrous olive-green synthetic stock with a medium height cheek piece, elongated thumbhole, steep drop-down pistol grip and a sliding rubber butt pad. The slim forend almost covers the air reservoir's underside, giving it a high level of protection. Semi-rigid, soft-touch, black rubber inserts are

integrated into the build at key holding areas aiding grip and comfort.

The detachable air reservoir has a forward-facing air gauge and a 200bar fill gives approximately 50 shots in .177 and 75 in .22 calibre.

The sidelever action runs a 14-shot, removable wheel-shaped magazine that's held in place by a retaining catch. Also, the design prevents double

loading. The semi-free-floating barrel has a substantial barrel band and the company's 'HE' (High Efficiency) silencer comes fitted on the screw-cut muzzle. The 2-stage, adjustable, match-grade trigger mechanism has a manual safety lever positioned rear/right of the action block. The self-regulating valve system ensures a high level of shot-to-shot consistency.



PRICE:
£646.99

WEBLEY RAIDER 10XS

Price: £646.99

Contact: Highland Outdoors - www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk

➤ The ambidextrous walnut stock has a relatively high cheek piece with a ventilated rubber butt pad. The quite lengthy and slim forend has fluting along the top edge to offer a good leading handhold. The relatively slim neck has a well-sized thumb shelf, plus the pistol grip has a chunky palm swell. A 190bar fill gives approximately 80 full power shots in .177 calibre and 80 in .22. An air pressure gauge is recessed into the underside of the stock. A side-position cocking bolt runs the 10-shot, wheel-shaped removable magazine, which is secured in its housing by a 'sprung' retaining pin. The 2-stage, adjustable trigger unit has a manual safety catch positioned directly at the rear of the action block. There's an integral primary silencer inside the full barrel shroud, plus the rifle comes supplied with the company's QGS II Silencer already spun onto the screw cut muzzle.



PRICE:
£399.00

GAMO GX-40

Price: £399

Contact: BSA Guns - www.bsaguns.co.uk

➤ The GX-40 has a black synthetic stock with a well defined high cheek piece and a slight 'hogs back' design. The thumbhole stock also features a thick, ventilated rubber butt pad, a very slim neck and a steep drop-down pistol grip. To aid grip, there are panels of very fine stippling on either side of the fore section and pistol grip. An air gauge sits on the front of the reservoir and a 232bar fill returns approximately 70 full power shots in .177 and 80 in .22 calibre. A flat-ended, teardrop cocking bolt runs a 10-shot, self-actuating magazine that sits deep in a recessed loading well and is held in place by magnets. The SAT2 trigger mechanism is a 2-stage adjustable unit with an in-guard manual safety catch set forward of the well-curved trigger blade. The cold hammer-forged barrel is strengthened by a barrel band and the 1/2" UNF screw cut muzzle is protected by a small ported muzzle brake.



PRICE:
£499.95

WALTHER ROTEX RMS VARMINUT UC (ULTRA CARBINE)

Price: £499.95

Contact: John Rothery Wholesale - www.bisley-uk.com

➤ The rifle has a black, ambidextrous synthetic thumbhole stock with a well-defined cheek piece and a thick ventilated rubber butt pad. The slim neck gives way to a steep drop-down pistol grip, while the distinctive forend swells out in quite a bulbous fashion, with a relatively thickset overall look and feel. It also has a well-rounded and contoured

underside and at the front, there's an underslung Picatinny accessory rail. There are raised ridges and curves set into panels located at the key holding areas. Charging the fixed 200cc buddy bottle to a recommended 232bar fill gives approximately 160 shots in .177 calibre and 180 in .22.

A teardrop-shaped cocking bolt on the side runs a drum-shaped,

8-shot alloy magazine, which is held in place by a retaining catch. The 2-stage, adjustable trigger unit is equipped with an auto re-settable safety positioned at the rear of the action, which engages (pops-out) every time the action is cocked. The airgun comes with a Umarex K3 Neo Silencer already spun onto the free-floating tube's 1/2" UNF threaded muzzle.

**WEIRAUCH HW110 MS PCP****Price:** From £786**Contact:** Hull Cartridge – www.weirauch.co.uk

➤ The ambidextrous beech stock has a rubberised over-mould. It features a high cheek piece with a rubber butt pad, drop-down pistol grip, a slim neck and thumb shelf. The forend includes panels of chequering on both sides. The air reservoir has a forward-facing air gauge and a 200bar fill gives around 110 shots in .177 and 130 in .22. It comes supplied with their 'HE' silencer and a sidelever runs a 10-shot removable magazine. The action and Picatinny rail has been manufactured from polymer, which reduces weight without sacrificing strength. The 2-stage, adjustable trigger unit has an ambidextrous safety lever positioned just forward of the mag housing. A self-regulating valve system ensures a high level of shot-to-shot consistency.

**STOEGER XM1****Price:** £395**Contact:** GMK Ltd – www.gmk.co.uk

➤ The rifle comes as a combo with a 3-9x40 AO scope, 2-piece mounts, 2x magazines, a single-shot loading tray, 2x Picatinny rails, a sound moderator and a filling probe. There's also an alternative blue pistol grip and an alternative height cheek piece. The ambidextrous, synthetic thumbhole sporter comes fitted with a low-medium height cheek piece, rubber butt pad with removable spacers and a drop-down pistol grip. The underside of the lengthy forend features chequering, which is also present on both pistol grip inserts. A 200bar fill returns approximately 40 full power shots in .177 and 55 in .22. The paddle-shaped cocking handle runs a 9-shot/.177 or 7-shot/.22 mag. The blade of the 2-stage adjustable trigger can be moved forwards or backwards and it's linked to a cross-bolt safety.

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The Whisper Sting is a handy, no-nonsense sporter from Gamo

No-nonsense Airgun



Mark Camoccio gets to grips with the Gamo Whisper Sting

Our modern airgun scene is an energized place to be right now, yet whilst we are undoubtedly spoilt with a multitude of designs waiting to tempt us at the local dealer, I genuinely find the lure of a break-barrel hard to beat.

Perhaps it's the pressure of testing a flurry of super high tech models, where expectations can be unrealistically high. Or is it the lack of procedure and fuss? Either way, the sheer simplicity of the time-honoured break-barrel configuration still holds huge appeal for many airgun enthusiasts the world over.

Simple but effective

Many of us cut our teeth, so to speak, with this system in one form or another, yet the humble break-barrel

is so much more than just beginners fodder. Spanish outfit Gamo has made their name originally with spring power and their current lineup carries many models along with IGT gas-ram derivatives. Indeed, a quick perusal of their main website soon revealed that there are just two fixed-barrel models against 20-odd break-barrel offerings! OK, admittedly importers BSA only bring in a selection to the UK market, but that ratio, massively in favour of the break-barrel configuration, is testament indeed to its enduring appeal.

On test here is the Gamo Whisper Sting, and it's a classic example of what this manufacturer does best. At 6.6lbs, this model can be

considered a lightweight and it soon becomes apparent just why that is. The most obvious factor is the black synthetic stock, and here, despite the 'ambi' credentials, the design offers a nicely defined cheek piece, plus a well-shaped and angled grip. Plastics/polymer is also used for the cylinder end cap (rather Airsporteresque), trigger blade and guard. Move to the front, and you'll notice that not only is that muzzle moderator/foresight assembly synthetic, but so is the barrel casing/shroud and breech block! A step too far? Well no. I've encountered the moulded breech arrangement on other Gamo's and all I can say is, it's manufactured to a pleasingly high level and in operation, it just works a treat.



The lairy muzzle assembly aids cocking as well as looks, note the fibre optic front sight



Note the in-guard safety catch

Sighting systems

Open sights are fitted as standard here and on this grade of airgun, that's always welcome. They're of the fibre optic variety too, meaning the sight picture is highlighted and effectively formed by coloured elements, and I would go as far as to say they are excellent. The foresight is protected by a small metal hood, whilst the fully adjustable rear sight is super robust, being of all-metal construction. Experiment with these sights first in any circumstance and I'm sure you'll be amazed at just how accurate you can be.

However, most shooters are lured towards glassware these days and with ever more affordable options to play with, that's hardly surprising. Having spent time with this Whisper Sting, I can vouch for the fact that its performance is such that it would be a crime not to exploit it to its full potential. Fitting a scope here is easy too. The compression cylinder is a good length on this model and that means that correspondingly, the scope dovetail rails are extensive. Plenty of mounting space then, and with the inclusion of a neat factory-fitted arressor block, any concerns regarding the dreaded scope creep, can be shelved. Just set up the rear mount, nudged against the block, and all should remain secure. Just ensure that any scope selected, is compact enough so as not to foul the breech area, as it travels through its arc of movement.

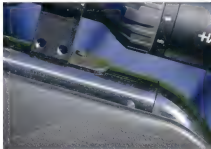
Feel and shot cycle

Cocking the action reveals a perfectly weighted breech set-up and release, and the downwards compression stroke itself is relatively easy and incredibly smooth. This is hardly surprising given the excellent leverage afforded by the extended synthetic shroud and integral muzzle assembly. Pushing a pellet home, directly into the barrel is always satisfying, and my test model had just the right amount of feel as a variety of pellets connected and thumbed home flush before the barrel locked home and closed.

The muzzle assembly here is indeed a sound moderator, and what Gamo terms 'Whisper NDS2 Technology'. The configuration sees the rifled steel barrel sitting inside a polymer outer shroud or jacket, with the large fluted



Fully adjustable fibre optic sights are always welcome



Detail of the cylinder end cap and arressor block

section containing a few baffles inside. The end result is claimed to reduce the muzzle report by up to 52% (hence the name), but don't get too excited. As with many of these devices, taming the output of a spring-powered airgun is never as starkly impressive as with a PCP, given the different way the air pressure dissipates. Plus, mechanical noise of the action/piston and spring, so often trump any token attempt at suppression at the muzzle.

That said, the Whisper Sting on test proved slick with regards to the firing cycle, and whilst maybe just a little harsh in feel, there was certainly very little spring resonance through the shot. Neither especially noisy or quiet then, to be fair. As for the trigger, I was pleasantly surprised and whilst this model doesn't seem to come with any trigger label, such as 'Custom Action' or 'Smooth Action', all I can say is forget the slightly silly jargon and be rest assured that it works rather well. The blade is as mentioned, plastic, but is so well shaped, being fairly wide and flat-surfaced, that it feels good in the aim. Admittedly, there was a small amount of creep on test but gently hit the second stage, pull through the initial creep and the final pull weight is perfectly reasonable.

Accuracy on test was genuinely impressive and my .22 example, using Crosman Ultra Magnum pellets and



The ambidextrous moulded stock includes a well-defined cheek piece



Extra grip is incorporated into the design

shooting from the classic FT over-arm sitting position, produced proper ragged holes of sub 3/8" c-t-c at 25 yards. Moving to the chronograph test, and whilst power was modest at 10.2 ft/lbs, consistency was again eye-catching, 10-shot strings with a total spread of just 7 FPS is about as textbook as it gets.

Competent

Seriously competent results then, and enough to make the Whisper Sting a confidence-boosting go-to rifle, for no-nonsense break-barrel sport. It's well up to hunting duties and even worth a dabble in springer class HFT, if my test gun's performance is anything to go by. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name:	Gamo Whisper Sting
Type:	Break-barrel, spring/piston
Calibre:	.177 on test, .22 available
Weight:	6.6lbs
Length:	46"
Barrel:	14.5"
Stock:	Ambidextrous synthetic sporter
Trigger:	2-stage, adjustable
Energy:	10.2 ft/lbs (average on test)
Price:	£160 (guide)
Contact:	BSA Guns - www.bsaguns.co.uk



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.177 CALIBRE PELLET SPECIFICATIONS

PELLET	WEIGHT	HEAD SIZE	QC
GOLDSTAR	0.56g/8.64gr	4.52mm	0.021
BLACKSTAR	0.68g/10.49gr	4.50mm	0.023
SILVERSTAR	0.47g/7.25gr	4.50mm	0.016
GREENSTAR	0.43g/6.64gr	4.50mm	0.013

.22 CALIBRE PELLET SPECIFICATIONS

PELLET	WEIGHT	HEAD SIZE	QC
GOLDSTAR	0.95g/14.66gr	5.53mm	0.019
BLACKSTAR	1.18g/18.21gr	5.50mm	0.026
SILVERSTAR	1.06g/16.36gr	5.50mm	0.020
GREENSTAR	0.84g/12.96gr	5.50mm	0.029

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The Elk Ridge Knives



Elk Ridge knives have some great features to make them stand out from others in their price range and are well worth a look. Made in China, Elk Ridge knives have 440 stainless steel blades, supplied razor sharp and ready to go. The three knives on test all have very well made wooden handles and are finished to a good standard, plus look much better than you usually get at these prices.

Dark Wood Lock Knife

The knife carries an extremely well-executed Elk Ridge stag logo, cut through the blade, and the clean detail of the cut out is remarkable. The 3" blade is 3mm thick, making it very strong, and for ease of opening, there are thumb studs and a blade flipper. Once you master it, the flipper can fully open and lock the blade in one quick and easy move, plus the liner lock mechanism holds it very securely. The handle has an attractive grain and is finished with a G10 bolster for added durability. There is also a nice big pocket clip on the side of the knife which holds securely.

Gentleman's Burl Wood Knife

The woodwork and the stainless steel bolster both feature finger grooves, which combine nicely with file-work on the back of the knife to give a really firm hold. The traditional lock back



The Elk Ridge logo cut-out in the blade of the Dark Wood knife is very nicely done and a great feature

Top - Bottom: The Dark Wood, Gentleman's Burl Wood and the Two-Tone Pakkawood Lock Knife



Options include large but slim pocket clips, attractive file work on the spine and a very clever blade flipper

mechanism is strong, making the knife very safe to use.

The 2.75" clip point blade has a nice hump on the spine, to the rear, allowing you to apply additional pressure with your thumb. An Elk Ridge logo is neatly etched on the side. Supplied with a decent quality nylon pouch, this is a really good looking and functional tool.

Two Tone Pakkawood Lock Knife

This is probably the best looking of the three knives, with the contrasting-

coloured woods really standing out against the stainless steel parts and the Elk Ridge medallion. The handle is smooth but longer than on the other knives, giving you more surface area to grip, plus it has a slight curve along its length which fits the hand nicely. The pocket clip is long

and slender so it holds the knife securely and close in.

The 2.75" drop point blade has a liner lock mechanism and a thumb stud for easy opening. The more slender profile lends itself to more detailed work like gutting small game.

Conclusion

The most remarkable thing about these knives is the quality that you get for the price. All under £30, they offer great value for money and the finish on the handles and quality of the blades is just not what you expect in this price range. These examples could easily sell at twice the price, so it's well worth grabbing a bargain while you can. **GM**

REVIEWER:
MARK UNDERWOOD

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Elk Ridge Gentleman's Burl Wood knife, Two-Tone Pakkawood Lock Knife and Dark Wood knife

Price: £24.99, £14.99 & £19.99 respectively

Contact: Knife Warehouse - www.knifewarehouse.co.uk

Lightweight, very tactile, safe to use and fast becoming my favourite rabbiting/stalking knife

Gerber Vital Knife



► The Gerber Vital pocket knife is a superbly made, lightweight tool in a folding format that comes with six extra blades, so when the one being used becomes blunt, just remove it and replace it with a new one. The tool comes with a warranty on materials and manufacturing defects for 25 years.

Specification

The knife measures 110mm folded, 178mm open and weighs 45-grams, so it can easily fit a jacket pocket. It features a belt clip but does not come with a pouch.

The two halves of the handle sandwich the stainless-steel locking mechanism and are manufactured from glass-filled nylon and rubber. The nylon is orange in colour in case you put it down and lose it! The grip shows a central trough with the Gerber logo embossed and forms a neat hold. For extra grip, the black rubber surround is textured and there are rows of raised nylon ridges (top, back and underneath). Its format makes it very ergonomic and it's neither right nor left hand biased.

The whole grip is held in place by cement, rivets and a pivot screw at the other end, so the blade can extend. There's a lanyard ring located at the end but no lanyard is supplied.

The blade

The seriously sharp clip point blades are made from surgical stainless steel and measure 72mm long, 10mm high and 0.4mm



The Gerber Vital takes care of all those sharpening duties by skipping them with its blade replacement system



PRICE
£47.95

The slim but very tactile grip is easy to clean and hygienic to use

Push down the button that lowers the locking tab to slide the blade off for replacement

thick. The overall cutting edge measures 54mm.

In a typical folding knife fashion, the blade swings down from the handle when the top locking lever is depressed. It can

be opened or closed one-handed if necessary.

The actual blade is an industry-standard surgical scalpel type with a fixture hole along its rear section. This clips securely into a

forward retaining clip on the knife and a rear sprung lever stops the blade from slipping off forward. This lever can be lowered by pushing down on the small sprung release button on the left/top side of the blade holder.

Replacement blades are available in a very handy orange plastic dispenser. Simply push on the top to release a sprung loaded blade. The old one can then be safely stored in a slit through the top, brilliant! Each box holds 12 spare blades.

In use

I particularly like this Gerber for skinning deer as the sharpness of the blade and its thin, small size are an asset to cleanly removing the hide from the meat and cuts around the pelvic joints. Rabbits too are no match for the Vital. Plus, when the blade dulls, I can just swap it out, so no more sharpening!

Conclusion

I would not be without this knife now as it makes my gralloching duties so much easier and safer as it effortlessly cuts without force. Being synthetic and stainless it's biologically neutral, so won't contaminate the meat and is very easily washed down and cleaned. Yes, a pouch would be nice and some may balk at the cost of spare blades, but to me, it's so cheap as I have ruined a lot of good knives in my time! **AM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Gerber Vital Knife

Overall Length: 6.88"

Blade Length: 2.79"

Weight: 37-grams

Price: £47.95

Extras: Box of 12 blades (£18.95)

Contact: Thomas Jacks - www.thomasjacks.co.uk

REVIEWER: BRUCE POTTS

Leatherman Tread Multi-Tool

PRICE:
£189.95

There is no shortage of multi-tools on the market and it can be difficult to find something 'different', but here we have a very unusual item from Leatherman.

The Tread carries a multitude of useful tools in a 'bracelet' format, so it can be worn around the wrist rather than being carried on your belt or in your bag. At 5.5oz it's not light, but it is very easy to get used to and you soon forget you are wearing it, much like a wristwatch. Being attached to you, the Tread is hard to mislay and always to hand, very clever thinking from Leatherman here.

Incorporating 29 individual tools, the entire bracelet is made of stainless steel and is fully adjustable, with the facility to add or

remove tools to customise it to your specific needs. It's constructed in such a way that it is silent, with no jangling to disturb the wildlife, and there are no sharp edges sticking out to snag on anything.

As well as a variety of screwdrivers, hex drive and Torx heads, there is a well-designed cutting hook that is very sharp but contained in a very safe and secure way.

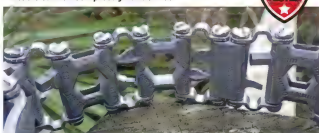
Overall this is a great tool, well designed and practical, with different versions and additional links available on the Whitby & Co website. Next time your significant other mentions jewellery, maybe a Leatherman Tread might be just the job? **AM**

REVIEWER:

MARK UNDERWOOD



29 tools carried completely hands-free



Every tool is clearly stamped on the back

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Leatherman Tread Multi-Tool

Price: £189.95

Contact: Whitby & Co. - www.whitbyandco.co.uk

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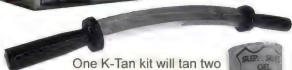
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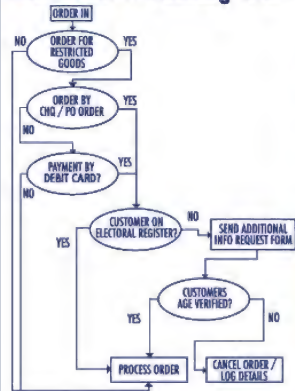
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This Ruger Precision Rifle (RPR) was a big unit to lift out of its box as it weighs just under 8kg. This then increases to 9kg once a suitable scope and bipod are fitted!

One of the first things I noticed was the 'Magnum Muzzle Brake', which is tuneable through rotation on the 3/4x24 thread to modify the muzzle reaction from recoil. It's a laterally ported unit with twin vents left and right, directing blast almost perpendicular to the bore axis. It's locked in position with Allen screws and a rear nut. A moderator could easily be added if that's your long-term preference.

The barrel is cold hammer forged with 5R rifling, intended to offer gentle jacket handling. The 1 in 8.375" twist rate stabilises long bullets up to 300-grain. Its 23mm muzzle diameter tapers up towards the action along its 28" length. Minimum bore and groove dimensions, headspace and centralized chamber are advertised within the 4140 Chrome-Moly steel as further assurances of precision. The surrounding free-floating forend is octagonal and measures 58 x 52 x 480mm (WxHxL). It shows masses of M-LOK and a full-length RRS spec 38mm dovetail underneath.

Monocoque or chassis?

The 4140-steel upper and 7075 aluminium lower are colour matched with the latter's Type III,

black hard-coat anodized finish offering a tough surface. The bolt is the same chrome-moly steel to minimize distortion.

Ruger's Marksman Adjustable Trigger offers a weight range of 1000 to 2200-grams (2.25 to 5 lbs). It's a familiar design, breaking in a single-stage after take-up of the initial movement on the inner safety blade. Mine broke at a consistent 830 (+/- 20-grams) with a 98% crisp feel. The AR-style grip gave a 60mm reach to the blade and there is a 2-position ambidextrous safety selector located just above it.

A 30 MOA Picatinny rail is supplied, which is appropriate to the chambering, for serious 1-Mile capability. Ruger runs the bolt's shrouded rear end within the buffer tube to maintain a low profile to the rifle without a taller, top-heavy layout, in what I describe as a superior 'monocoque' construction, rather than a simple 'chassis' rifle.

Milling details

The lower sites the mag well and release catch in front of the trigger guard. A barricade support is present if required, although this seems more of a heavy, prone use rifle to me. Two detachable steel magazines with a 5-round capacity are supplied and they present the rounds to the three-lug, 70° lift, 25mm diameter nitrided bolt with right-side extractor claw and sprung plunger performing flawlessly, without undue brass or bullet damage on feeding. A tubular aluminium follower/shroud stores trigger adjustment tools on a bolt with a 290mm overall length and 70mm handle showing matt black teardrop tip. The forward bolt shaft, although cylindrical, shows complex faceted underside machining to ease congestion with rounds located in the magazine. These are factors that are unfairly ignored when saying the RPR looks externally, a bit mechanical. The unobserved details become

I didn't spend too much time punching paper with 1000 metres on hand at WMS

BIG LAD

After using all the smaller variants, **Chris Parkin** gets his hands on the Ruger Precision Rifle in .338



a key factor in the excellent handling personality of the rifle.

Fitting the task

All stock adjustments are controlled by toggling levers and opposing nuts to set absolute tension. RPRs fold for bolt removal, which also helps get this 48" long rifle into a gun case or cabinet. Length of pull (LOP) shows extensive adjustment from 13-17". The cheekpiece has linear and vertical travel, plus the stock hinge is secured with a strong, sprung detent and can be locked folded. I liked the bolt release catch on the left side, which remains unobscured by the folded back end. The interconnected nature adds to triangulated security and flex-free stability once locked down.

Getting the most out of the ammo

Edgar Brothers supplied some Hornady ammunition, which consisted of some 285-grain

ELD-Match and 270-grain ELD-X. Unusually, both exceeded their advertised velocity figures, perhaps testament to the 5R rifling pattern! The limited quantities meant a very focussed review project, so with zeroing at 100m immediately showing sub MOA performance, and the turrets zeroed, I was straight off to the 1000m firing point. Overcast skies, 10°C air temp and wind speeds below 3 metres per second were not going to be wasted! I had a huge quarry backstop to spot splash, so with the previous 10 MRAD elevation DOPE dialled in, with spin drift pretty much offset by wind direction, the first round required an elevation reduction of 0.6 MRAD. The difference between the two ammo types was around 0.4 MRAD, with the slightly higher speed making up for the lower ballistic coefficient on the ELD-X when compared to 'M' bullets.

Refinement

Lateral wind shift and vertical bumps saw me leave the

scope on 9.5 MRAD and I used the reticle to aim off/compensate for the constantly changing conditions. Here is where long range rifles get really interesting to me, as you have to shoot quite quickly to make up for wind changes with regular corrections.

Being able to keep your head planted on the cheekpiece behind the optic during recoil is critical to seeing bullet trace. It takes only a tiny change in the wind to drift it tantalisingly close to the edge of a steel gong and here is where the Ruger most impressed me. The recoil was extremely well controlled through physical mass and the directional brake's tuned position to eliminate muzzle jump. I could retain the sight picture whilst cycling the bolt and scope alignment remained unaffected as I waited for the bullet to land. It takes 1.7 seconds to fly 1000m and the wait for the 'clang' to come back is even longer. Being able to reload and compensate almost instantly when a strike is observed is additive. The next bullet is in flight less than 2 seconds after the sound of the previous one returns. This significantly eased coping with 3-dimensional wind changes, where the previous shot is always the best wind indicator.

Large .338 bullets show more 'trace' as they disturb the air in flight, making spotting a little easier for those observing, while the recoil pulse of the rifle obscures it for the shooter a little, hence



Bolt operation with minimal positional disturbance was a big draw for the RPR



The stock can be folded, note all the available adjustment



The familiar Ruger trigger is adjustable, note the 2-position AR-type safety lever



Detail of the fully floating forend with RRS specification underside rail



Excellent brake geometry reduces recoil with minimal noise disturbance to the shooter



Maybe not a one-hole group, but good enough in the real world to get started with at 1000m on steel



The Ruger Precision Rifle in .338 Lapua Magnum is quite big!

PRICE:
£2500.00



Magazine performance was flawless with long-lasting steel feed lips

AMMO TABLE

Ammo	Ballistic Coefficient (G1)	Box velocity (FPS)	Average Muzzle Velocity (FPS)	Best 100m group
Hornady 285gr ELD-M Match	0.829	2745	2832	Sub M.O.A.
Hornady 270gr ELD-X Match	0.757	2800	2881	Sub M.O.A.

why minimal magnification and a generous eye box is helpful to maintain the sight picture during this split second. I found the Ruger better for this than many other .338s because of the recoil control and physical comfort.

I took some shots prone over gravel surfaces to assess blast pattern, and no debris was scattered in my direction or under the muzzle. Physical recoil was more a push than a hit and the rifle tracked far straighter than many others, with reloading/bolt manipulation hardly affecting the aiming position.

Addictive

For me, the way the gun shot, the handling, not just groups on paper are what impressed me and I enjoyed shooting it. Many .338s can be a physically mind-numbing concussive hassle, where 40 rounds would have been far more than I would have liked, never mind too few as with the Ruger.

The RPR didn't always appeal to me when it first appearing six or so years ago, but it has grown on me ever since, standing the test of time and inspiring copies that just didn't get it quite right in comparison. It's not perfect, the stock's back end is angular and not the most comfortable on your knuckles for an underside supporting hand, but it's fair to say a monopod could be mounted if needed. I would personally add a hand stop/butt hook just

to help this matter. Once set up for me with a 14.5" LOP, it was comfortable and secure in the shoulder. The ribbed, firm, radiused edged recoil pad measuring 120x35mm (HxW).

The distance from the recoil pad to the bipod's feet measured 38", aiding stability. Loading the bipod was reassuringly solid without any loose joints in the stock clicking as pressure was applied.

Conclusion

The .338 RPR really seems to fit its own skin in this largest calibre variant and it was a rifle I thoroughly enjoyed shooting. Smooth recoil transit, minimal brake disturbance and stable bolt operation remain lodged in my memory. It's a rifle with delightful manners given its plentiful energy and range capabilities that become more easily accessible than some peers. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Ruger Precision Rifle
Calibre: .338 Lapua Magnum
Overall Length: 49-53"
Weight: 18lbs
Length of Pull: 13-17"
Magazine Capacity: 5+1 DM
Trigger: Single-Stage with inner blade safety
Barrel Length: 26" heavy barrel
Twist Rate: 1:8.375"
Stock: Aluminium Chassis
Scope Mounting: 30 MOA Picatinny rail (included)
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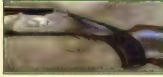
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Remarkable Rifle



Jules Whicker takes a fresh look at Steyr's radical Scout rifle

Some guns radiate the creative energy of a design team committed to reaching further and achieving more. The Steyr Scout is that kind of gun. In fact, there's so much to look at and to like here that I'd better get started!

Parameters

US gun guru Col. Jeff Cooper (1920-2006) laid down some parameters for what he called a 'scout rifle': max length 1m; max weight 3kg; chambered for a widely-available short-action .308-calibre cartridge; fed from a box magazine; fitted with aperture iron sights; with the provision for mounting an intermediate-eye-relief (IER) scope ahead of the receiver.

Collaboration

In the 1990s, Steyr Mannlicher hooked up with Cooper to produce a scout rifle as an 'off-the-shelf' factory item. Basing the Scout on their already-innovative Safe-Bolt System (SBS) platform, Steyr's designers scrupulously ticked all of

Cooper's boxes and then added some neat extra features of their own: an integral bipod, a second magazine handily stored in the butt-stock, adjustable length of pull and aftermarket options including higher-capacity (10-round) magazines as well as a height-adjustable comb and butt-pad.

Barrel

Cooper's weight restriction called for a light barrel, so Steyr went for a 19" tube chambered for the .308 cartridge (for which 19" is plenty), gave it a 'pencil' or 'buggy-whip' profile, and then cut deep flutes into it. The original finish was stainless, but today you can opt for Steyr's proprietary MannoX coating, which resists sweat and blood as well as abrasions and moisture. Current UK rifles also come threaded 1/2" UNF.

Receiver

Trimming weight further, the Scout's receiver was made from aluminium alloy, which was an innovative choice for a

turn-bolt rifle in the 1990s. As on the AR15 and Blaser R93, pressure was contained by having the bolt directly lock into a barrel extension. Head-spacing is via a clever collet system hidden away within the hand-guard, so removing the barrel requires specialised tools. Integral to the receiver is a low-profile Picatinny/Weaver optics rail that continues along the upper handguard (also made from aluminium).

Safe Bolt System (SBS)

The Scout belongs to a family of SBS-equipped Steyr turn-bolt rifles. System features include a recessed bolt-face and a safety collar around the bolt/barrel interface that work together to protect the shooter in the event of a ruptured case. The bolt-body has grooves to cut through debris that might seize the bolt and channel it clear of the action. The shroud has a visible/tactile cocking indicator and stripping is a quick-n-easy twist-lock/unlock affair. The handle is threaded, so if you don't like the standard round ball you can easily replace it with a teardrop knob.

Fire control

The Scout is available with a choice of a (standard) 2-stage or (optional) set trigger. Pull weight on the former is factory-set at around 3.5lb and the break is clean, consistent and predictable. This is just as well since no adjustment instructions are provided and the screws are lacquered over. The SBS series is noted for its 3-position 'wheel' safety. From the forward 'FIRE' position (red dot), roll back one stop to the 'LOAD/UNLOAD' position (white dot) to lock the sear but not the bolt, then roll back one more stop to the 'SAFE' position. This locks everything and pops up a button that has to be depressed before the wheel will move again. In this position, pushing the handle down against the stock cams the striker out of alignment, creating a 'double-safe' condition in which the rifle can be safely carried with a round chambered. The safety is also used when removing the bolt: simply lift the bolt handle, then roll the wheel back to 'safe' to free it from the receiver.

Feeding

As befitted his vintage, Cooper envisaged a blind box magazine fed via stripper clips. Moving with the times, Steyr chose a detachable box, whose followers, bodies, floor-plates and integral mag catches are neatly moulded from tough black polymer. The double-stack design makes loading easy and feeding smooth. Magazines can be engaged in two positions. The first



Alloy pillars in the stock and a steel block mounted under the receiver take care of recoil issues

secures the mag but leaves the rounds shy of the bolt, acting like a magazine cut-off to enable single feeding over a reserve. To engage the second position and feed from the mag, simply push it fully home.

The Scout comes with two magazines, the second of which is neatly stored in a compartment under the butt, where a spring pops it smartly into your hand when you release it. Standard versions hold 5-rounds.

The optional high-capacity kit comprises an extended mag well that clips to the stock and accepts 10-round magazines. These include witness holes

that show the odd-number round-count on one side and even numbers on the other.

Stock

The stock is also made from tough polymer and is available in green or brown as well as standard black. The surface has a matte texture but could usefully be more tactile, especially at the hand. Better is the front end, where a ridged rubberised insert on each side of the forend gives a good hold. The butt pad is solid rubber, which is firm but grippy. It clips into one of a pair of removable spacers that can be detached using the shaft of a screwdriver (or similar). Additional spacers are available separately if required. Triangular panels in the sides of the butt can be swapped out to accept a cartridge holder (L/H) or to mount the optional height-adjustable comb (R/H). This involves removing the butt plate but is otherwise easy to do. Ahead of the magazine compartment is a small storage space with a clip-in cover.

Forend

Pressing a latch underneath the forend releases the sides to act as the legs of the integrated bipod. The ridges that added grip to the former now lend rigidity to the latter. The legs have wear-resistant metal inserts in the tips and click audibly into place when fully deployed. The pivot at the front lets you eliminate cant, and lateral play allows some panning. No height adjustment is provided and 'loading' the



Field stripping the Steyr's bolt is quick, easy and requires no tools



The bolt is optimised for fast shooting, note the unique roller safety and the visible/tactile cocking indicator in the shroud



L-R: steel bipod tips, bipod latch, UT accessory rail and sling attachment point



The Scout is equipped with a set of adjustable polymer backup sights



The stock holds 5 or 10-round magazines without modification, and there's an additional storage compartment in the grip



The trigger blade's proportions and contours are excellent, plus the pull was a crisp 3.5 lbs

The bipod is non-adjustable but quick to deploy away from when closed, and always there when you want it.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

NAME: Steyr Scout
CALIBRES: 308 Win (on test), 7mm-DB, 6.5CM, 243 Win and 223 Rem
PRICE: £2,044
CONTACT: Sportsman Gun Centre - www.sportsmanguncentre.co.uk

bipod heavily will collapse it. Not perfect, certainly, but better than nothing at a pinch, and always useful as a rifle stand. Ahead of the bipod latch is a flush-fit UIT rail. Stud and Picatinny adapters are readily available and inexpensive, so fitting a conventional bipod is easily done.

Sling attachment

Five flush-fit swivel sockets are provided: on both sides of the rifle (at the toe of the stock and forward of the mag well) and underneath (ahead of the UIT rail). These take proprietary swivel loops with a T-shaped foot that look into the sprung slots in the sockets with a press-and-turn action. The middle sockets are there because Cooper liked a 3-point sling design called the 'Ching Sling'. Even with a regular sling, the QD system is excellent.

'Iron' sights

Back-up polymer 'iron' sights (BUIS) are integrated into the rear receiver bridge and upper hand-guard. The rear sight has to be lifted with a fingernail (or bullet tip) and features a wide

'ghost-ring' aperture for fast acquisition, plus it's adjustable for elevation. The front sight is spring-loaded and activated by a sliding catch. It has a bold square blade highlighted (sometimes) with a white line and is adjustable for windage against a reference scale. Adjustments require a small screwdriver.

Optics

Cooper's BUIS/IER sighting package poses some problems when mounting modern optics. Firstly, the upper hand-guard (required for an IER optic, redundant otherwise, but a fixture nonetheless) creates a flat-top profile that obliges you to choose a conventional scope with a small objective lens or source extra-high mounts. The latter option will lift your head out of contact with a stock originally designed for compatibility with the BUIS sights, though this issue is readily resolved by fitting the adjustable comb (available separately). Having only one rail slot fore and aft of the receiver port also limits the choice of scopes, whilst the choice of mounts is constrained by the narrowness of the slots, whose dimensions are more 1990s 'Weaver' than 2020s Picatinny and crying out for modernisation.

Shooting

Feeding is smooth, the bolt throw is slick and the trigger is clean. If you use the irons or a little low-mounted scope, the stock ergonomics work pretty well, though (as noted) I'd like more grip at the wrist. Raise the sightline, however, and the rifle starts feeling snappy and becomes less pleasant as well as less accurate to shoot. Happily, adding the optional adjustable comb restores the harmony, plus an adjustable butt pad improves things further. With the rifle properly set up, and from a field rest, 3-shot groups with 110 to 178-grain loads ranged from 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches. After shooting, the bore cleaned easily, as hammer-forged barrels usually do.

Applications

Light, compact and rugged, plus with the capacity for safe loaded-carry, the Scout is a handy stalking rifle. Sans-moderator and equipped with the high-capacity kit plus a red dot or low-power variable scope, its fast, slick bolt and 20-round payload have serious driven-hunt potential. However you configure it, the Steyr Scout is a truly versatile and practical rifle – in short, precisely what it was designed to be!

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POWERFUL ALTERNATIVE



Externally similar internally very different, but both the TrackIR 35 models tested were strong performers at their respective price points

Jules Whicker checks out the latest thermal spotters from Guide IR

Guide Infrared are a major presence in industrial thermal imaging and were pioneers in making consumer-oriented devices for hunters, albeit their star was soon eclipsed by Pulsar's domination of the market. Yet with demand for thermal currently outstripping even a ramped-up Pulsar's capacity to meet it, Guide, and distributors Thomas Jacks, have stepped up to the plate with a brand new range of monoculars, bi-oculars and weapon sights.

Not one but two

As an opener, Thomas Jacks kindly sent me both the standard and Pro variants of Guide's TrackIR-35 monocular. The former has a solid specification, with a 35mm f1.2 objective lens, a 400x300 @ 17µm vanadium oxide (Vox) sensor; a base magnification of 2.3X, a FOV of 11.1°x8.3° and a 4X smooth digital zoom. That 300x400 sensor is bigger than the 384x288 specification on most manufacturers' standard models, but if

this makes a difference, I confess I couldn't see it. The Pro model, meanwhile, boasts a truly top-end 640x480 @ 12µm Vox sensor. Teamed with a 35mm f1.0 lens, this gives a lower base magnification of 2X and a wider FOV of 12.5°x9.4°. There's twice as much digital zoom, too (8X). As you would expect, the image from the standard model is nothing to complain about, but the Pro is in a different league, delivering an image comparable to the top-end Pulsars.

Both units use the same body, but the Pro's lens is considerably larger externally than the standard model's, though both are equipped with a protective rubber buffer. The rubber is ribbed for grip, and it needs to be because lens movement is quite stiff. This makes it harder to achieve a fine focus, but is ultimately a good thing, because once you've set the focus for the far side of a field, say, you can be sure the scene will still be sharp every time you put the unit to your eye.

Ocular lens focus is via a dial at the rear left of the body and is agreeably hassle-free. Just twist it until the screen icons are crisp, and you're done. This is a nice change from my old Pulsar Helion, where keeping the dioptre ring where I want it requires a couple of turns of electrician's tape. The Guide's soft rubber eye-cup is comfortable, too, but its symmetrical design means it's not really perfect for either eye, and it was also prone to coming away when snagged, so you may need that tape after all! Also readily dislodged was the Pro's rubber lens cover, but at least it's tethered, so you can't lose it.

More details

Inside the eye-piece, the 1280x960, 0.4", colour LCOS display feels large and sharp. Guide liken it to watching a 22" screen at 1m and I wouldn't disagree. The perceived size of the display lets you make good use of the picture-in-picture function, which boosts the central part of the image by 2X.



USB-C and HDMI ports are protected behind a rubber cover that stays firmly in place when closed



I found the tapered profile less ergonomic than it looks. The forward centre of gravity gives the unit a tendency to tip down



A tripod socket is provided for a steady mount or when remote viewed via the smartphone app



The layout of the rubberised control buttons makes them easy to tell apart, even when wearing gloves



A massive increase in demand for thermal vision is bringing new options into the market, but few have Guide's track record for performance and quality

Unusually, the PiP window can be assigned to the upper left, right or centre of the screen. With the eye-piece focused, menu items are crisp and clear, but I'd rather their intensity was independently controllable instead of tied to the screen brightness setting.

The body of the monocular is ambidextrous, but - aside from a smart red metallic ring at the rear - it's not particularly distinctive as it shows the common FLIR-style tear-drop profile. You would think this would be ergonomic, concentrating the weight at the widest part of the unit near the lens. Nevertheless, the unit really only settles into your palm if you cock your wrist right back. Moreover, concentrating the weight at the front means that at least three of the five control buttons are well behind the fulcrum and stretching to press them causes the unit to tip.

No big deal, perhaps, but this effect was naturally greatest when using the rearmost button, to which the camera

functions are assigned. Consequently, still images suffered from motion blur unless the monocular was supported with both hands. This was obviously not a problem in video-capture mode, but I would have liked to see a pause function integrated between the start and stop actions, so as to be able to record the interesting bits of an encounter to a single file instead of ending up with dozens of brief individual snippets.

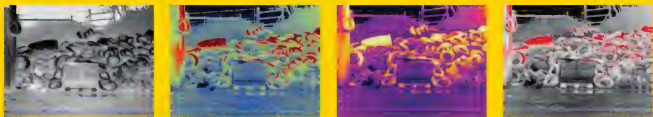
The images are stored in JPG (still) and MP4 (video) formats on a built-in 16Gb memory card and can be accessed via USB or a WiFi connection to a dedicated smartphone app. The app itself is basic but functional, permits remote viewing and control if you want them, plus is available in both iOS and Android flavours.

Nature, highlight and enhanced

Moving forward from the camera button, we come to the 'DOWN', 'MENU/ENTER' and 'UP' buttons. All the buttons

are rubberised, a good size, and easy to tell apart by touch, resulting in few control errors. As usual, the buttons offer both long and short-press inputs and for the most part, these are intelligently mapped to maximise access to the functions you want most often. Nevertheless, the brightness and contrast settings aren't on quick-access, requiring you to enter the menu to set them. This doesn't take long but makes tuning the image in sub-optimal conditions a bit more involved.

A brisker approach to image optimisation is to scroll through the 3 quick-access profile settings dubbed 'nature', 'highlight' and 'enhanced'. The 'nature' profile gives an image that is low on contrast but brings out all the nuances of tone available. 'Highlight' seems to use this as a base image, but boosts the warmest areas into high contrast. Finally, in the 'enhanced' profile the whole scene shows in high contrast. I used 'nature' as my default profile,



The range of palettes lets you find the best fit for each scenario.

since I found it easier on the eye, but switched to 'highlight' periodically, to check for any heat sources I may have missed, or to track confirmed sources better. However, if weather conditions worsened, or the terrain was unusually cluttered or featureless, I selected 'enhanced' to compensate for this.

Changing colour palettes can be useful too. Both the TrackIRs offer white-hot, black-hot, red-hot, iron and blue modes, whilst on the Pro model the red-hot mode is labelled as 'adjustable' in 10% increments. Unfortunately, it wasn't clear in the menus or the manual how to set the red-hot level, and the standard-setting tended to highlight more of the image than was useful.

Nearest the lens is the 'power' button. Activation takes a long, firm press and is confirmed by a green LED near the eyepiece. Start-up is quite slow (around 17 seconds from first press to image), so it's good that there's a standby function, and that return from standby is almost instantaneous. Also nice is the fact that you can set an automatic shutdown time to avoid draining the battery if you accidentally leave the unit on. Additionally, there's a 'super energy-saving' quick-access option that simultaneously reduces the screen brightness to 30% and deactivates the WiFi.

Power comes from a pair of built-in 18650, 6000mAh Li-ion cells charged via a USB-C socket tucked away alongside a Micro HDMI socket behind a rubber port cover. The cover is a little fiddly to open but stays put when closed, which is more important. I prefer clip-in to built-in batteries, as they're user-replaceable if they fail, but both units gave the advertised 4-5 hours of run-time. This can be extended by using the standby function or simply hooking up an external power bank to the USB socket. The aforementioned LED shows red when charging and green when charged, plus, for greater stealth, you can switch it off via an option in the menu.

Conclusion

Overall, these Guide monoculars give you all the features thermal users have come



When you use both hands and concentrate on keeping the monocular steady, you can get some great images. (Pro)

to expect, even if their presentation isn't quite as slick or stylish as Pulsar's. The Guides' NETD figure of ≥ 50 also lags a bit behind the equivalent Pulsar offerings (≥ 40 / ≥ 25) but this was no evident handicap to orientation, detection or identification. Thus, the standard TrackIR35 is a solid performer, whilst the Pro version is as impressive as its specification suggests. The form factor will be a matter of taste. For example, I like the eye-piece focus and

button design, but not the balance of the tapered housing, which also felt bulkier than my boxy Pulsar Helion. All that said, if bang for your buck is what ultimately counts, then specification-for-specification both the TrackIR-35s are attractive propositions at their respective levels and well worth considering. Plus, they are backed up by a 2-year manufacturer's warranty and expert distributor support from Thomas Jacks.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

MODEL	TrackIR-35	TrackIR-35 Pro
SENSOR	400x300 @17µm, Vox	640x480@12µm, Vox
NETD	≥ 50 mK	
LENS	35mm/f1.2	35mm/f1.0
FOV	11°x8.3°	12.5°x9.4°
DISPLAY	1280x960 0.4" color LCD	
MAGNIFICATION	2.3x (bare) = 8.2x (digital)	2.0x (bare) = 16x (digital)
DETECTION/IDENTIFICATION	1000/500	1400/700
1.0M-0.5M TARGET		
FRAME RATE	50Hz	
BATTERY TYPE	internal Li-ion battery (2x18650, 6000mAh)	
WORKING TIME	≥ 5 h	≥ 4.5 h
WEIGHT	485-grams	560-grams
DIMENSIONS	192x65x71	216x65x71
STANDARD ACCESSORIES	Charger, USB cable, Micro HDMI cable, wrist strap, storage pouch, quick-start guide	
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CONTACT:	Thomas Jacks Ltd - www.thomasjacks.co.uk	



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SRP £2,649.95 inc. VAT

2 XQ50

- 384x288 17µm <40mK NETD thermal sensor
- Fast f/1.0 germanium lens
- 1800m distance detection
- 3.5x - 14.0x magnification (4x digital zoom)

SRP £2,949.95 inc. VAT

2 XP50

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Pete Moore considers what a turret press can offer the reloader in terms of an alternative production system

Reloading presses come in three distinct options, that suit all needs; high output semi and full progressive machine (400-rounds an hour +), to the single station design, which might produce 50! Here the speed of production is not an issue, but consistency and precision are. Slower but more precise might be a better description! Sitting in the middle of this mini arms race is the turret press, an often overlooked option, that appears to combine aspects of the aforementioned designs and in doing so is neither fish nor fowl, but something in-between that might appeal.

The name says it all

Looking a bit like a progressive, which has fixed dies and a rotary, multi-station shell plate, attached to the ram, the major difference is that all the dies sit in a

circular holder (the turret). This can either be rotated by hand (indexed) or with some designs automatically, as the press is operated. Also, it uses a standard shell holder as those on single station designs. And with the ability to select manual or automatic operation (some models), means you can easily produce one complete round at a time; start to finish, or batch the usual operations; size/de-cap, prime and bullet seat etc.

Most of the larger reloading companies offer turrets but I decided to go with Lee Precision, as it's a brand I use most of the time and trust. On test is their Lee Value 4-Hole Turret Press with Auto Index kit. They also offer a larger model called the Classic 4-Hole, which differs in having a cast iron base and the ability to handle longer cartridges/

calibres. Both accept the standard 14x7/8 TPI dies and shell holders.

Kit & kaboodle

The 'Value' shows a cast, aluminium frame in Lee's red livery. The top plate (planter) attaches to this by three steel posts to give a stronger, D-frame like configuration. The actual turret is aluminium and shows four die stations, this just drops in and a quick turn locks it in place while still allowing rotation. In the centre of the base is a square shaft with a spiral section, which as the ram falls provides the power to turn (Auto Index) the turret to the next station for each operation of the handle. This component is removable depending on the sort of reloading you wish to do.

The base plate and ram section etc. is all single-stage, with a compound leverage system aided by a large and reversible,

L-shaped operating handle with a comfortable, foam-rubber roller grip. Priming is handled by two, ram-mounted, drop-in, L-shaped arms for large and small primers. The kit includes Lee's Auto Drum Powder Measure and Safety Scale, Primer Pocket Cleaner, Cutter and Lock Stud to trim the cases, and a Chamfer Tool to deburr after trimming.

Optional is an automatic priming system, and if you want to use the Auto Drum powder measure, you'll need a riser tube that goes into the powder-through die that's operated by the rising case. If not, you won't be able to adjust it, as the other dies block it. However, you can also fit a funnel to the expander die, via an adaptor and pour a pre-weighed charge into the case, or even use their powder scoops, as they work well too.

Spare turrets are available and inexpensive at £13 a time, so if you're a multi-calibre loader, it's a simple matter to grab a spare or two, pre-set the required dies and drop the new one into position ready to go. If you opt for Lee, they come with a shell holder as standard, so that's one less thing to buy!

Caveats

I borrowed the machine from Lee importers, Henry Krank & Co Ltd for making 9mm Parabellum ammo for a gun test on the SGC Lever Action rifle, they also supplied a Deluxe set of 9mm, Carbide pistol dies too. The sizing die has a carbide insert, so you don't have to pre-lube the cases, which is an advantage on a machine that can offer a 200-rounds per hour production rate, over a single station design.

Although it's not solely for pistol calibres, according to Lee Precision, it can only reload a maximum cartridge overall length (COL) of 2.3125", so will handle the likes of .222/223 Remington or .30 Carbine etc. However, for longer rounds, you can disengage the auto index and manually rotate, plus you'll need a rifle, powder-through charging die. If your needs are calibres like .308 Win., .30-06 etc, then I'd recommend getting Lee's Classic 4-Hole Turret instead, which offers all the same functions but has a higher COL tolerance.

How do I?

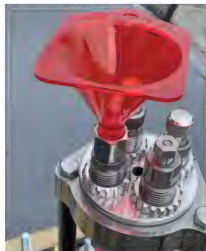
At a mere £172.30, complete with turret, two priming arms and the auto drum powder measure, safety scale, primer pocket cleaner, cutter and lock stud, the



The turret holds four dies and is easy to change, spares cost £13 each, so no problem setting up all your calibres for a minimal outlay



A sized case being primed at the bottom of the ram's stroke



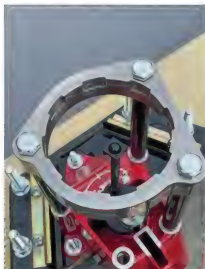
The simplest method of dispensing powder is to use Lee's funnel adaptor and powder scoops



The Auto Drum Powder Measure uses a riser tube in place to allow it to clear the other dies



A primed, charged and neck-expanded case with a bullet in position prior to running into the seating die



Platen with turret removed, note the removable Auto Index shaft that fits into the centre of the turret

Value Turret Kit, as always with Lee products, represents great value for money! The question is, how will you use it? I'm a fiend for pre-prepping my cases, so they are sized, trimmed, cleaned and primed well before reloading, so in some ways negating the advantages of a production system like this.

However, the calibres with carbide dies (mainly pistol) require no lubrication, so the 9mm will allow you to simply ensure the brass is debris-free and go straight into the de-cap/re-sizer. I'd probably tumble them first! If using standard steel dies, you will need to lubricate the fired cases before sizing, however, I'd recommend wiping it off afterwards to avoid the possibility of contaminating the powder or even primer.

Set up

Setting up the dies for function is as before. Drop the turret into the planter and rotate it, so it engages, fit the shell holder, and raise the ram to its fullest extent. One at a time, screw in the dies and adjust them for length etc. in the normal manner as to their function. When happy, tighten the lock rings.

The Auto Drum powder measure screws into the top of the powder-through die and is actuated by the rising case. This is a volumetric system that uses plastic discs with multiple chambers, each one giving a different charge weight. Discs are rotated to alter the charge; Lee offers an optional double-disc kit (complete with extended screws) that allows you to stack one on top of the other to increase loads for higher capacity rifle cases.

For the 9mm, I went for the simpler funnel adaptor and threw Ramshot Enforcer pistol powder charges using the suitable Lee Powder Scoop, which I found to be less hassle. Conversely, weigh charges individually on the powder scale and adjust to weight with a trickler, then pour them in. Alternatively, you could use their manually-operated Perfect Powder dispensers. With an adaptor, they fit the powder-through die too.

Prime time

The turret rotates anti-clockwise and indexes near the bottom of the ram's stroke. The priming arms are L-shaped and fit into a slot in the side of the ram. All you do is drop a primer (anvil-up) into the cup and operate the handle. As the ram rises, the arm is forced in and ends up passing through the shell holder to seat the primer in its pocket. Arms can be left in position at all times as they do not interfere with the operation. I found priming on the



Included are, Lee's Auto Drum Powder Measure, Safety Scale, primer pocket cleaner, cutter and lock stud. Just add dies and a shell holder



Underside of the turret with dies in position and the Auto Index shaft engaged. Note its spiral operating section

downstroke after sizing seemed most sensible, as I would not want to do it under the 'powder-through' station, just in case!

Leaving the primed case in place, you will see and hear the turret rotate to the next station as the ram goes down. With a pistol setup, this will be neck expanding/powder charging, and for bottle-necked rifle brass, just charging with a suitable die and adaptor. The third station will be bullet seating, so remember to put it in the case neck. If you require the fourth station, it would be for crimping. Here, I would fit my Lee factory crimp die, which I find aids consistency and reduces extreme velocity spread too. The 9mm set has a taper crimp die as standard. And that's

you done, so remove the loaded round and put a fired case in the shell holder and repeat! You will soon build up an operating cadence and the advertised production rate of 200-RPM is achievable.

One of the advantages for me was the ability to just load exactly how much ammo I needed, without all the hassle of changing individual dies. I found this useful when making small batches for load development.

End game

I've owned lots of progressives but never a turret, so it was an interesting and instructive exercise to test one. The Value Kit will suit the new reloader or someone wanting to up their production a bit, personally, I'd just buy the machine as I don't need the powder handling or case prep accessories. As I don't shoot any pistols these days, I'd go for the Classic 4-Hole model but for a club shooter who has a Long Barrelled Revolver or pistol calibre lever-action rifle, along with say a 223 Rem rifle, it's a nice cost-effective setup and well worth a look!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- NAME: Lee Value 4-Hole Turret Press with Auto Index Kit
- INCLUDES: Turret, Priming Arms, Auto Drum Powder Measure, Safety Scale, Primer Pocket Cleaner, Cutter, and Lock Stud
- PRICES:
- KIT AS TESTED: £172.30
- LEE VALUE ALONE: £108.20
- CLASSIC 4-HOLE ALONE: £142.80
- SPARE TURRETS: £13 each
- CONTACT: Henry Krank - www.henrykrank.com



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The Leupold Mark 5HD 5-25x56 Rifle scope, with Tremor3 reticle

Serious

Performer

Chris Parkin gets the chance to exercise a Leupold Mark 5 on long range steels with a rimfire

Leupold's Mark 5 range are their premium long range and tactical usage riflescopes with three models, all featuring a 5x zoom capability in 3.6-18x, 5-25x and 7-35x variants. I was using a 5-25, which is always the benchmark specification for serious precision rifle optics with a comparable 56mm objective lens. The Mark 5 unusually uses a 35mm scope tube versus the more commonly accepted 34mm and Viking kindly supplied a set of Leupold's own Picatinny fit mounts to anchor it securely. Overall length is 414mm, including flip-up lens caps on either end and the scope weight of 975-grams is competitive for the functionality on offer. The tube features a matte hard anodising, thankfully smooth without the tendency to draw all the dust particles from your skin.

Tactile turrets

The centre saddle is overall spherical in silhouette but shows quite unusual and characteristic flat facets to deviate from the norm. I liked the look of these and the very well-defined turrets. All clicks are MRAD based, with 10mm@100/0.01 MRAD

per click on both windage and elevation. On the right side, the former is under a cap with 5 MRAD (50 clicks) marked clearly left or right from the centre marker, itself slightly above horizontal, closer to the eye line peeping over the top for a right-hander or unobscured by fingertips to the left-handers.

The clicks are exceptionally well-weighted and tactile, slightly audible and overall, have a luxury feel with no overrun or requirement to watch your dialled corrections.

Elevation on the upper turret remains lower in profile, with a 22mm standoff above the saddle. It measures 40mm in diameter with some well-spaced squared off knurling for grip. Clicks are again delightfully tactile, balancing diameter and spring tension in the well-spaced detents with 10.5 MRAD (105 clicks) per turn.

More clicks

There is a zero stop with 11 underside 'buffer' clicks, which is super easy to set up or alter. There are two Allen screws that can be loosened, allowing the outer indicator to turn freely back to

marked zero. With no clicks heard, you are assured the internal mechanics are disconnected and not altering anything. None of this detracts from the turret's locking capability, and at zero, a black button stands proud of the dial to retain position. A light press is all that's needed to unlock and add elevation (or sub-zero stop clicks). As the first rotation is reached, this button changes roles and on passing 10.5 MRAD it lays flat to indicate turn two. When you reach the third turn (21 MRAD onwards), it recesses itself and a small silver button rises proud so that you can feel it with your fingers.

Overall mechanical travel within the tube is 35 MRAD for elevation, of which 30 are accessible in total from the MSC3 designated unit, which I found excellent in use. It passed all box testing procedures, matching all previously confirmed DOPE values for longer shots.

Image perception

Parallax is controlled on the left side with a smoothly rotating, but firmly weighted dial that operates from 50 yards to infinity. There were no issues with backlash and a crisp image was always available. A rear fast focus dioptre collar has the detailed reticle covered similarly and never needed alteration after primary setup.



Parallax, illumination and elevation detail



The removable 12mm throw lever adds tactile feel without interfering with the bolt handle



The multi-function locking button is neat and still tactile

Windage detail, note the marker above horizontal for easier sightline



The illumination battery cap includes a tether so that it can't be lost

A CR2032 battery resides under the outer cap on the left side, with a retention cord so that it can't be lost. Illumination from the 7-stage dial has intermediate 'off' steps controlling the centre dot of the internal reticle and small red spots on the 2, 4, 6 and 8 MRAD intersections located on the lower 6 o'clock stadia, plus similar dots at 2 MRAD lateral spacing. There is no positional auto-off, so mind your battery.

Being in the first focal plane, everything on the reticle enlarges with precise correlation to the magnified image. Illumination is very subtle, never extremely bright, there's certainly no sparkle or shimmer with a bleeding glow. In my opinion, it's only a low light illumination assistant but like any complex reticle, will suit some peoples tastes better than others.

The 'Tremor3' reticle comes at a premium price, probably due to the extreme etched complexity and illumination precision, which I sadly found impossible to photograph while illuminated during use.

No bolt intrusion

With a stubby throw lever at 8 o'clock relative to the shooter, the

magnification control runs clockwise from 5x, finishing on 25x with the lever at 2 o'clock. It won't interfere with left or right-handed bolt handles and its modest 12mm (removable) length offers grip without excessive bulk. I found the magnification control fast to use with no internal noise or motion perception.

The field of view is easily judged from the reticle subtensions, as it goes from 70 down to 14 MRAD as magnification increases, which is equivalent to 7-14 metres at 100m and 70-14m at 1000m etc.

Image focal detail is flat across this width, with no fade out on the edges, bright and sharp, easily focussed precisely and remaining good as the light faded, without any specific steps in optical rendition. It certainly never went 'milky' above 15x, as one or two premium optics have in fading conditions. Eye relief was well specified for likely heavier/recoil-suppressed precision rifles at 91.5-96.5mm. The image was vignette free when central but the eye box was perhaps fractionally more critical than some.

The scope is also available in MOA and the HD specification certainly obtains richer colouration, which can often be ignored in precision rifle optics.

Opinion

Only the buyer can decide whether the Tremor3 reticle meets their requirements and is worth the extra money, but this is a very capable long-range scope with easily used tactile turrets that are simple to set up. All the internal mechanics are in place for serious long range performance and assured dialling capability, but the other reticle choices seem more appealing, financially. There are some great turrets in this game, these are the equal of any, in my opinion, ideally blending function with ergonomics and without excess height.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

NAME:	Leupold Mark 5HD 5-25x56
RETICLE:	Tremor3
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT TYPE:	M5C3
LOCKING DIAL:	Yes
REVOLUTION INDICATOR:	Yes
WINDAGE ADJUSTMENT TYPE:	Capped
CUSTOM DIAL COMPATIBLE:	Yes
WEIGHT (GR/OZ):	875/30
CLICK VALUES:	0.1MR
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT RANGE:	35 MIL
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT PER REVOLUTION:	10.5 MIL
ELEVATION DIAL TRAVEL LIMIT:	30 MIL
WINDAGE ADJUSTMENT RANGE:	17 MIL
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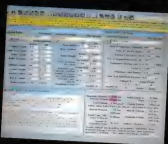
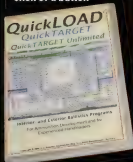
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MORE ACCURACY PLEASE



This gauge can help sort through your rimfire ammunition to eliminate irregular rim thicknesses that cause inaccuracies.

Bruce Potts discusses Hornady's Lock-n-Load Rimfire Thickness Gauge

Sorting rimfire ammunition by rim thickness is a quick and easy procedure to add to your shooting prep regime. It provides rounds with uniform rim thicknesses that ultimately result in similar ignition qualities thus improving accuracy.

The Hornady Rimfire thickness gauge forms part of the Lock-N-Load series of reloading kit and is a cost-effective piece of equipment. It attaches to your measuring calipers and includes bushings for use with all .17 and .22 calibre rimfire ammo, except the newer .17 WSM.

There are two caliper fixtures/anvil bodies and two aluminium cartridge holders included in the kit as well as a lanyard.

Spec and setup

Firstly, the lanyard is there to stop you from dropping the calipers and causing an accidental discharge of the rimfire ammunition. This is a typical USA safety thing, personally, it gets in the way so use it at your discretion. Be sensible in its use and do not force any rounds to be measured.

Simply open the jaws of your calipers and attach the shorter of the two anvil bodies to the travelling blade. These anvil bodies are red anodised aluminium and feature an attachment slot which locates in the caliper jaws. They are secured by tightening a knurled brass thumbscrew. Next, attach the other anvil body to the non-travelling jaw of the caliper and secure it in the same way.

Now you have to align both these pieces so that when the jaws of the caliper are closed, they align perfectly. Simply close the jaws and loosen and re-align both anvils until the mating surface join square on. Then tighten the brass screws.

Now you can insert either the .22 or .17 cal aluminium body/cartridge holder into the larger of the two anvil bodies. It's then held in place with another brass screw. To complete the setup, close the caliper jaws and zero the tool. My smaller body anvil kept loosening so keep an eye on it.

Measuring

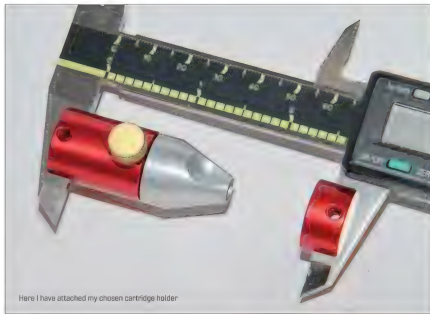
The use of the .22 rimfire bushing is ideal for .22 shorts, .22 Long, .22 Long Rifle and 17Mach 2. I have also used it for reduced load .22 rimfire rounds like CB and BB caps, which are notoriously inconsistent. The .17 rimfire bush is used for the .17 HMR as well as the .22 WMR, due to the matching body diameter.

With your box of ammunition, I write down the lot number taken off the ammo box as a reference and then use 3 or 4 labelled tins to segregate the different

measured cartridges into. Now insert one round at a time into the larger bushing and close the anvil against the rim with a light closure. To ensure you get a true and consistent reading every time, it's very important to use the same pressure each time and not to force the caliper jaws shut.

You can also set the caliper differently to zero against the rim of the cartridge with the jaws closed so that instead of writing down the actual rim thickness measurement, any variation is now shown as a variable measurement from that zero figure. It's up to you how you measure. Make sure you sort all the same rim thicknesses into the same tins.

Obviously, the largest groups of the same rim thickness can be used for 'best' and the rest can be used for plinking or zeroing in rifles.





Step in a .22 rimfire cartridge and close the jaws, take the measurement and then sort into the same rim thicknesses.



Alternatively, you can choose the most common rim thickness and zero off this case and then any differences are a variation from zero.

Results

My primary tests were with a variety of differing .22 rimfire ammunition. I will sort some .17 HMR another time, as there was so many .22s I wanted to try out first.

I usually sort my .22 LR rim thicknesses using a Bald Eagle rimfire gauge. By adding a special adapter I can also measure .17 HMR ammo, but I was keen to see how the Hornady one would work. I normally get no more than a 5% increase in accuracy, although the variation between the velocities quite often halves!

First up were the BB and CB caps, which I like to use for very short-range work. They are not particularly accurate, to be honest, so any gains are welcome. Most .22 LR rimfire thicknesses are 0.040" or 40 thou. The BB measured 0.0405 and the CB caps 0.4250. Sorted thicknesses varied for the BBs from 0.0400 to 0.04155 and 0.0400 to 0.0455 for the CB caps. The sorted ammo for both shot 1" groups at 20 yards, with a velocity deviation drop of some 35 FPS, while the out of spec rims shot 1.25-1.50".

I also really like the CCI CB long as these feed through most magazines and

offer far better accuracy than the BB/CB caps. They offer lower noise and power for short range vermin but they can be a little inconsistent at times. The rim thickness was from 0.0380 to 0.0405" and accuracy at 20 yards was hovering around the 1" mark prior to sorting. This reduced to 0.85-1.0" with the sorted 0.0400 rims. Also, a drop down from a 24 FPS variation to 18 FPS average was observed.

More data

Now the normal .22 LR fodder. I tried a few subsonic loadings as these represent a normal diet for any respectful vermin gun, HV ammo would work just as well no doubt.

The Eley subsonics were running from 0.0375 to 0.0380", so pretty sweet, and shows why these rounds are always so consistent and accurate straight from the box. Sorting helped to decrease the variation in velocity but accuracy wise, it was not really noticeable, to be honest. Other subsonics, like CCI Segmented and Remington Subs, did benefit a bit from the process as the would-be 'fliers' caused by irregular ignition issues were filtered out.

A 1" group at 30 yards shrunk to 0.85" without fliers.

I also sorted the SK Long Range Match ammo I use for long range shooting, and just like the Eley ammo, these rounds are so consistent anyway. I couldn't really see any difference other than that the odd fliers were eliminated, a benefit in itself, I guess.

Conclusion

For about £40, dependent on the retailer, this Hornady Lock-N-Load Rimfire Thickness Gauge is a great addition to anyone's arsenal of accuracy kit. It's foolproof to use and does help sort out the wheat from the chaff, with regards to dodgy ammo.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

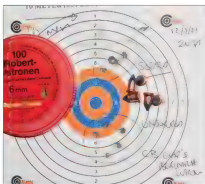
- > **NAME:** Hornady Lock-N-Load Rimfire Thickness gauge
- > **PRICE:** £40
- > **CONTACT:** Edgar Brothers - shootingports.edgarbrothers.com



Eley Subs were excellent anyway but occasionally at greater ranges, we did find the rim sorting eliminated some vertical stringing.



The Hornady rim thickness gauge certainly helped to shrink the CCI CB long rounds as shown.



I like the CB caps for very close range vermin and again the rim sorter really did help achieve better groups.



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The functionality of the S510T comes from the fact that all mounting points are to international specifications, the grip mount, the M-Lok slots in the fore-end and the mounting location for the butt stock. This means rifle configurations can be adapted to any shooter and indeed changed in minutes to suit changing conditions.



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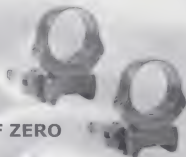


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Accessorisising the BENCH

Mark Underwood explores some useful reloading accessories that can really help with the speed of production and ammo consistency

As well as the larger tools on the reloading bench, like the press, dies, scales etc, there are a lot of really useful accessories that you can add to make things just that little bit easier and quicker. Here are just a few of the smaller and relatively cheap ones that have proved their worth.

Case Trimmers

Case length must be consistent in order to produce quality ammunition. It dictates exactly how the case engages with each die and also contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the crimp on your finished rounds. To keep cases all to the same, it's important to trim them regularly and there are a variety of tools available to do this.

One of the simplest tools is the Lee Precision cutter and lock stud, combined with a calibre-specific case length gauge and shell holder. This handheld tool uses an insert of the correct length to hold the case, while the cutter removes any excess brass. Although this is a slow method, it does yield very consistent results, because the gauge length is set and cannot be adjusted or changed.

The bench-mounted case trimming tools tend to be a lot more expensive



One of the simplest tools for case trimming is the Lee Precision cutter and lock stud

and, although once set up they also give very consistent case lengths and are faster than the handheld tools, you cannot beat the simplicity of the Lee tool.

Universal Decapping Die

If you are depriming large numbers of cases of different calibres before cleaning them, then a universal decapping die is a great tool, because it allows you to run cases of all calibres through it, and you only have to swap over the shell holder. There is no resizing and no friction with the case walls, so no need for lubrication. The lubricant-free, deprimed cases can be cleaned and resized as required later. Resizing cleaned cases is much smoother and also avoids clogging the sizing die with dirt from the sides of the cases or scratching them.

Universal Case Expanding Die

Another multi-calibre die from Lee Precision, the Universal Case Expanding Die includes a pair of neck plugs that can be used in various combinations to flare cases up to .45 calibre. If you are having issues seating cast bullets, like shaving lead off the bases/sides or want to avoid damaging Moly or low friction coatings on match quality bullets, this die allows you to adjust the flare on your cases very precisely, to accept your particular projectiles without damage. Some flat-based, lead bullets in big calibres like .45-70 sometimes need that bit of extra flare on the case mouth to start them off. This die allows you to get it just right. You can set how far the plug goes into the case to give you a very consistent and effective flare.



Really useful accessories need not cost the earth and are well worth adding to the bench

Digital Scales

Technology appears to be everywhere and it seems that not even reloading is safe from its grip. Although balance-type scales are very accurate and reliable, the digital types are much faster, quicker to set up and easier to read. So long as you remember to reset them to zero every time, they produce very consistent readings and are a big time-saver, especially if you weigh every single powder charge or weigh your bullets to weed out the odd rogue bullet by weight. Because there is no waiting for the beam on a balance scale to settle, you can get through a lot more weighing and still get consistent charge weights.

Wire Wool

Although having a proper case cleaner is great, they're not cheap and sometimes, even when brass has been through a case tumbler, there can still be ingrained dirt and burn around the neck area. The quickest and most effective way to dislodge it, is to rotate each case inside a lump of fine wire wool. Applying just enough friction will clean away the dirt that other methods just do not seem to shift. Too much pressure will of course wear away brass, so you need to watch for the wire wool taking on a brass colour and ease off the pressure accordingly. This can also be done before or after the cases are put through a tumbler to give a really good clean or, if



you do not have a tumbler, it is a good way to clean your brass on its own.

Tumbler Media Additive

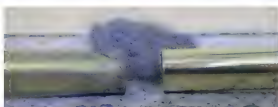
Case cleaning is important and the case-tumbler types, filled with suitable media, are effective and worthwhile. To get the cases just that bit more polished, which helps the reloading process and chambering rounds in your gun, a good quality tumbler media additive is well worth investing in. The Flitz additive seems particularly effective on brass cases, not so much on nickel-plated ones, and a few drops added to the tumbler media really does make a difference. A £15 bottle lasts for ages and so it is well worth using if you have a tumbler.

Conclusion

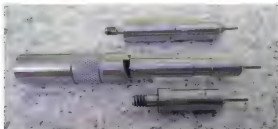
Sometimes less really is more and you do not have to spend a fortune on top-end reloading gear to get great results. Single-purpose dies are often the best way to overcome a problem or improve your reloading, without breaking the bank. Other gear you have lying around, like the wire wool, can often be repurposed to do a reloading job effectively. **AM**

Contacts:

Lee Precision and Reloadr – Henry Kranks – www.henrykrank.co.uk
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Just a few light turns with wire wool brings case necks up a treat



The Lee Precision case cutter is calibre specific for consistent case length trimming



The universal case expanding die allows you to adjust the flare on your cases very precisely



Digital scales are quick and easy to use and with regular calibration checks, give consistent results



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11lb / 454g

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RAMSHOT BIG GAME

SKU: RAM1



BIG GAME is the ultimate 30-06 Springfield powder. Outstanding velocities and optimum case-fill result in excellent shot to shot consistency. These properties also allow it to outperform the competition in the popular 22-250 Remington and other calibers in this range. It's an extremely clean burning, double-base spherical powder.

£42.90
11lb / 454g

RAMSHOT TRUE BLUE

SKU: RAM6



TRUE BLUE is the perfect powder for classic calibers such as the 38 Special, 44 Special and 45 Long Colt. Its a double-base, spherical powder with great metering properties that make it an ideal choice for consistent results using high volume, progressive reloading equipment. It works well with cast bullets and is also an excellent choice for 9mm law enforcement rounds.

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RAMSHOT ENFORCER

SKU: RAM2



ZIP is a clean burning, double-base propellant designed for a wide range of handgun calibers. Low charge weights make it the most economical and versatile choice for high volume shooters with the added benefit of low recoil, low flash and minimum residue. 9mm, 40 S&W, and 45 ACP are just a few of the cartridges that are well-matched with this powder.

£42.90
11lb / 454g

RAMSHOT X-TERMINATOR

SKU: RAM7



Excellent flow characteristics and small grain size allow trouble-free loading in small diameter case necks. It performs extremely well with light to medium weight bullets in the 223 Remington. It is also an excellent choice for 17 Remington, 20 caliber cartridges, 222 Remington and the 45-70 Government.

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RAMSHOT HUNTER

SKU: RAM3



HUNTER is a double-base, clean burning, high performance propellant that is perfect for elk country cartridges such as the 270 Winchester, 300 WSM and 338 Win Mag. It's the only spherical powder in the popular 4350 burn range making it an ideal powder for a wide range of cartridges. The excellent flow characteristics allow accurate metering and consistent shot-to-shot results.

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SKU: RAM8



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SKU: RAM4



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SKU: RAM9



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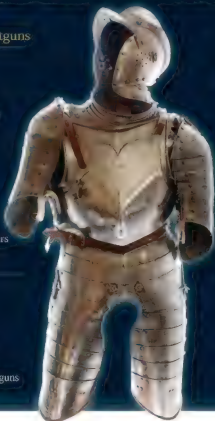
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Tack Driver

Pete Moore looks at the new Tikka T3x Super Varmint and finds a rifle much to his taste



PRICE:
£1950

Comin' at ya!
Tikka's new T3x
Super Varmint,
RoughTech,
Cerakote-in-6.5
Creedmoor, talk
about a winning
combination.



It's not a small rifle at 43.9" and around 12lbs fully rigged, but it's a shooter, note the add-on forend and pistol grip units.

Tikka has always had an excellent reputation as rifle builders and the brand has a worldwide following. The introduction of the T3 series back in 2003 heralded a new era for the company and although feelings were mixed, this new model carved an equally strong following as had the previous and much loved and now discontinued pre-2003 guns. In 2016 they took the T3 forward again with the T3x version and have been building on it ever since.

I have tested the older Tikka models, and they were great rifles. But the T3 impressed the hell out of me, so much so, that the T3 Lite in .243 Win I tested in 2004, got Shooting Sports' award for 'rifle of the year'. Regrettably, I have never owned a Tikka, as at the time I had enough rifles to start a small war and I now regret that. This year I broke that duck with the acquisition of their T1x MTR .22 rimfire, brilliant little gun and I love it!

Upgrade

One popular type of rifle, regardless of the manufacturer, is the varmint, which features a heavier/longer barrel and a more target-orientated stock, that can help get the most out of any calibre. Tikka is no different and has offered several variants, the latest being the Super Varmint Cerakote! I first shot this 2021 version at GMK's media day, at the Holland & Holland Shooting Ground (now owned by Beretta) back in May and sweet it was with some serious potential.

This model shows the usual heavy and, in some cases, long barrel with calibres ranging from .223 Rem up to the larger stubb and including the current wonder kid; 6.5 Creedmoor (CM). My tester was in CM with a 23.7" tube. I've been running a Bergara B14 HMR (Hunter Marksman Rifle)



That big bolt handle is superb, note the cocked action indicator, 2-position safety and the unlocking catch



Feed, as standard is from a 5-shot, single column polymer mag, a 10-rounder is optional

also in 6.5 CM with a 24" barrel, which is very much the same thing, so I welcomed the chance to see what Tikka brought to the party!

Hunter/varmint?

Tikka has struck a nice balance with the Varmint as it uses the T3x stock, which is pretty much standard hunter/sporter-type furniture. The synthetic material used appears quite rigid and they have not stinted on the build. The inside of the forend is cross-braced for added strength and as with all versions, a steel recoil lug is inset at the front of the action void, with a corresponding slot in the underside of the receiver for location. The front and rear of the action voids show inset blocks, over drilled to act as pillars, although I could not ascertain if they were alloy or polymer!

The trigger guard is polymer with integral aluminium washers, doubtless to protect the material when it's torqued down, as it could split. Tikka quotes two settings: 7 Newton Meters (NM)/62 inch/lbs for an

aluminium bottom metal, and 5 Nm/42 inch/lbs for plastic. I'm surprised that on a rifle of this type they even bothered giving the option of plastic! Trawling the interweb shows a lot of discussion about this, with some owner's saying that their guns don't shoot well using the Tikka settings, with a general impression that lower is better. I set mine at the recommended 42 inch/lbs and had no problems at all.

The finish is called Roughtech and consists of a green outer with black over web for added grip. However, to improve shootability, there's an adjustable comb/cheek piece and a generous rubber recoil pad with spacers for length of pull (LOP). Also, Tikka's fuller and more upright pistol grip and forend additions come as standard. I have retrofitted both to my T1x (same stock dimensions) and they do make a difference.

Heart of the matter

The heart of any good rifle is the barreled action and Tikka have done us proud here. The heavy, slightly tapered tube is hammer-forged, it and the



The worst group was a pleasing .78", best an amazing .26" with three more hovering around the 1/2 MOA area



Butt detail, note the generous recoil pad with LOP spacers and the adjustable comb

steel receiver are finished in a tough and attractive Tungsten Cerakote. The muzzle is well crowned and shows a 5/8x24 UNEF thread with a protector. The bolt body has spiral flutes, which helps decrease weight and also reduces possible fouling build-up and therefore stiff operation. The twin lug head shows a Sako-type extractor (what else?) and plunger ejector, they have also opened the ejection port a little to improve single loading.

Tikka has always included their standard 15mm dovetail rail for Sako Optilok scope mounts, and the Super Varmint is no different. However, they also fit a one-piece Picatinny rail on top. Great idea, as those dedicated mounts cost around £150, and a decent set of compatible rings will save you some money with no loss of performance. At the front of the rail is a stud for a mirage band, again a useful accessory for a rifle of this type.

Controls

The safety is a simple 2-position lever, rear-right of

AMMO TABLE

Ammo	Weight/type	Average	Extreme spread	Accuracy
Reload	107G, Sierra TMK	3252fps	60fps	0.26"
Hornady	120G Outfitter GMX	2982fps	47fps	0.78"
Hornady	143g Precision Hunter ELD-X	2623fps	13fps	0.54"
Norma	130G Match BTHP	2899.3fps	56fps	0.42"
Barnes	140G Precision Match BTHP	2715.3fps	41fps	0.46"

the action. It pushes forward to FIRE and backward for SAFE, where it locks the bolt. However, a small catch at the front allows operation in this mode, which is good for unloading drills. The trigger is a 2-stage, adjustable unit (2-4 lbs) and from the box, it was set at a crisp 3lb break with zero hesitation. To adjust, remove the action from the stock and with a 2mm Allen key turn the grub screw at the front of the housing clockwise to increase and anti-clockwise to decrease the weight. It's ideally suited to the longer range possibilities offered by a rifle like this. Rear-left is the bolt catch and a cocked action indicator protrudes from under the shroud. Typically, the action cocks on opening and operation is easy with the elongated, teardrop-shaped handle with a large plastic ball end. Feed is from a polymer, single column, 5-round magazine (10-shot optional). The release catch is located at the front of the well and pulls back.

First impressions

The Super Varmint is not light at a shade under 8 lbs (barebacked) and when you've got the obligatory, suitable scope, bipod and probably a sound moderator on board, you can no doubt add another 3 lbs to that. It's also long at 43.7" (not including moddy) with its 23.7", 1.8" twist barrel, which will squeeze the most performance out of the majority of 6.5CM cartridges. Given its main role of longer range precision and small and elusive targets, none of that makes a difference. I say this, as it's the sort of gun you shoot supported,



(Above) The 2-stage trigger can be adjusted from 2-4 lbs, wound down to minimum it breaks like a glass rod

(Right) Although a hunting-type stock, the RoughTech is well built and rigid, note the cross-bracing in the forend

be it off the bonnet of your truck, prone or similar. The major impression is one of a well built and useable design. Snugging in behind the butt, wrapping my firing hand around the big pistol grip, adjusting the comb and getting a feel for the rifle is instinctive. So, promoting a feeling of instant shootability. Unlike some others I've tested in the past,

you don't have to work too hard to make it all happen with the Super Varmint.

Down, test and adjust

For the test, GMK supplied a Stalon reflex moderator and a Burris Four Xe 6-24x56 scope in some of their adjustable MOA rings. (I'll be looking at these in a separate product test.) I added a Harris BRS 6-9" bipod and a selection of

ammunition, which included some Hornady 143-grain ELD-X Precision Hunter and 120-grain Outfitter Non-Lead as well as some Norma 130-grain BTHP Match, Barnes 140-grain Match and my reload using a Sierra 103-grain TMK (Tipped Match King). Tikka says the free-floating barrel guarantees 1 MOA accuracy, but I had higher hopes for some of the loads.

Testing was done at 100m and performance was as I expected and, in fact, a good bit more (See Ammo Table). The best group was 0.26" (with two shots cutting each other) and the worst was 0.78", with the other three hovering around sub ½ MOA. Feed and function was 100% and the modified ejection port allowed easy single-loading, a feature useful on any bolt-action rifle. The nominal 24" tube also got the best ballistics too, which is perhaps the ideal length for a 6.5CM. And, as I already mentioned, the Super Varmint is an easy and instinctive gun to use.

The extended bolt handle with its big ball end proved easy to manipulate and once I'd dialled down the trigger to its 2lb minimum, the crisp and creep-free break was to be appreciated. One thing I did notice was the magazine needs to go in dead vertical, otherwise, the rear end catches in but the front does not. It's not an issue, but in the heat of the moment you need to have your drills down pat, it caught me out a couple of times, then I understood it was down to operator error. Honestly, one of the sweetest and straight-shooting rifles I've used in a long time! GM

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Tikka T3x Super Varmint, Roughtech Cerakote
Calibre: 6.5 Creedmoor (on test)

Capacity: 5+1 (DM)

Barrel Length: 23.7" medium/heavy profile

Thread: 5/8x24 UNEF

Twist Rate: 1:8"

Length: 43.9"

Weight: 8lbs (barebacked)

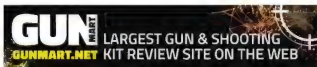
Stock: Synthetic green with black over-web

Mounting: Picatinny rail as standard

Trigger: 2-stage, Adjustable (2-4 lbs)

Price: £1,950

Contact: GMK Ltd - www.gmk.co.uk



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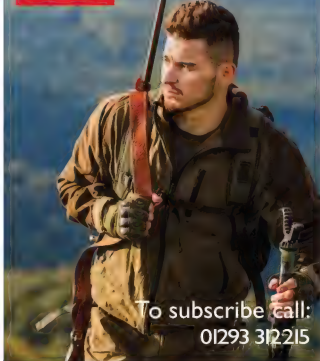
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I used the 150-grain .308 Win variant in a few test rifles and found, on average, it hovered just around the 1 MOA threshold that's so commonly expected.

The muzzle velocity listed on the box of 2820 FPS was almost reached in a 22" barrelled Sauer, which summoned 2786 FPS, for 2586 ft/lbs of energy.

The blunt, soft noses were reasonably uniform for consistency with a plain tangent ogive to the jacket beyond. This generally makes ammunition more forgiving across a wide range of barrels at hunting ranges. Even if it's not the latest and greatest in terms of ballistic coefficient (BC) and long-range precision, this is straightforward ammunition for hunting with what may be seen as an old fashioned but well understood and reliable bullet form. **GM**

REVIEWER: CHRIS PARKIN



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Edgar Brothers Ammunition

Price: £111 (per 100)

Contact: Edgar Brothers - shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com

MTM Case Guard Wind Reader Shooting Range Flag

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pin to slot the flag over. A green sticker is supplied to easily differentiate the two sides quickly and a secondary orange ribbon is applied to assist with speed as well as direction variation. The aluminium poles weigh virtually nothing and it all clips back together safely and easily (the steel pin is quite slim) to tuck back in your range bag.

I have hung onto this one and intend to buy a couple more. They withstand rain and sunlight, the metal is corrosion resistant, and I can't think of a better gift for your birthday or Christmas list in 2021. Thoroughly recommended, it brings greater understanding and



visual appreciation of your bullet's flight to the target, whether you are a plinker or serious load developer

wanting to observe even the slightest wind variations! **GM**

REVIEWER: CHRIS PARKIN

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: MTM Case Guard Wind Reader Shooting Range Flag

Price: £16.95

Contact: Hannams Reloading - www.hannamsreloading.co.uk



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Every McMillan stock features precision accuracy built with the toughness of a tank. What's more, McMillan offers more styles, more colours, more options and more customisations than any other manufacturer.

So you can set up your custom rifle exactly the way you want. Never accept second place.



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THE FULL RECKNAGEL CATALOGUE IS AVAILABLE AT alanrhone.com

Picatinny Rails

Precision made, model specific picatinny rails. All rails come complete with all necessary screws and wrench for fitting. Simple to fit yourself at home, with no gun smithing work needed. We also provide full support and advice on any scope mounting enquiry.

Sauer 202

£57.00



Tikka T3

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Sako 75/85

£105.00

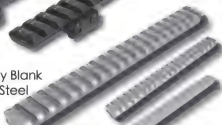


CZ 550

£65.00

Picatinny Blank 204mm Steel

£71.00



Picatinny Blank 204mm Aluminium

£60.00



Picatinny Blank 404mm Aluminium

£80.00

Aluminium Rails

Anschutz 1780 - £57.00
Anschutz 1900 - £57.00
Benelli ARGO - £57.00
Browning BAR - £57.00
Browning A-Bolt - £57.00
Browning X-Bolt - £75.00
CZ 550 Dovetail - £65.00
Hornet Jager 10 - £57.00
H&K SL8 2000 - £57.00
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Krico 700 / 900 / 902 - £57.00
Marlin 1894 - £57.00
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Mausier 98 - £57.00
Mausier M12 - £57.00
Mausier M12 - £57.00
Remington 700 Long - £57.00

Remington 700 Short - £57.00
Remington 7400 / 7600 - £57.00
Remington TAC - £57.00
Remington 783 Long - £57.00
Remington 783 Short - £57.00
Rossier Titan 3 / 6 - £57.00
Rossier Titan 16 - £57.00
Ruger 10 / 22 - £57.00
Sako 75/85 XS, S, SM - £105.00
Sako 75/85 M, L - £105.00
Sauer 101 - £57.00
Sauer 202 Standard - £57.00
Sauer 202 Magnum - £57.00
Sauer 303 - £85.00
Savage Long - £57.00
Savage Short - £57.00
Steyr-Mannlicher - £57.00

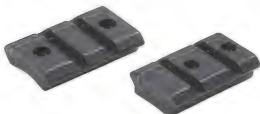
Tikka T3 - £57.00
Winchester 70 - £57.00
Winchester WSM - £57.00
Winchester WSSM - £57.00
Winchester SXR Vulcan - £57.00
Winchester XPR - £57.00

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Mausier M12 - £71.00
Remington 700 Long - £71.00
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Sauer 202 Standard - £71.00
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Aluminium Bases

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Benelli ARGO
Browning A-Bolt/X-Bolt
Browning T-Bolt
Browning BAR/BLR
Browning 88R
Browning Eurobolt
Browning Mausier
Heym SR 20 / 21 / 30 / 40
Howa 1500
Krico 700/900/902
Mausier 94 / 96 / 98
Merkel SR1 Basic
Remington 700

Rossier Titan 3 / 6 / 16
Sauer 80 / 90 / 92
Sauer 200
Sauer 202
Savage
Steyr-Mannlicher S, M, L
Swiss Arms SHR-977
Weaverby Mark V / 300
Winchester 70 Std / Mag
Winchester 70 WSM
Winchester 70 WSSM
Winchester 88 / 100
Winchester SXR Vulcan
PLUS MANY MORE.....

from

£36.00

Picatinny/Weaver Rings

High quality, precision made, strong aluminium rings. Fit directly onto your weaver or picatinny rail. Available in either Tri-Nut, or Quick Detachable.



Tri-Nut

from £145.00

Ring Diameters:

1 inch

30 mm

34 mm

36 mm

40 mm

Heights Available:

6.0mm, 9.5mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm

6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm

6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm

7.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm

8.0mm, 12.0mm



from

£149.00

Quick Detachable

Ring Diameters:

1 inch

30 mm

34 mm

36 mm

40 mm

Heights Available:

6.0mm, 9.5mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm

6.0mm, 9.5mm, 12.0mm, 14.0mm, 19.0mm, 22.0mm

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Tip Off Mounts

Picatinny Tip Off Mounts for Swarovski Rail Scopes

Tri-Nut Fixing
£193.00

Quick Release Lever Fixing
£195.00



Picatinny Tip Off Mounts for Zeiss Rail Scopes (45°)

Tri-Nut Fixing
£162.00

Quick Release Lever Fixing
£167.00



Picatinny One Piece Tip Off Mounts for Rail Scopes

for: Swarovski / Zeiss / S&B
Nut Fixing - £180.00

Quick Release Lever - £189.00



Picatinny One Piece Tip Off Mounts for Ring Scopes

1", 30mm, 34mm, 36mm & 40mm

Nut Fixing - £180.00

Quick Release Lever - £189.00



RECKNAGEL

Pivot Mounts

Recknagel pivot mounts are high quality, quick detachable and feature excellent return-to-zero with low mounting height. The very low construction starts at 10.8 mm (including the base) for 26mm, 30mm, 34mm, 36mm or 40mm rings.

Mounts for Zeiss ZM, Swarovski SR, Schmidt & Bender Convex are also available.

Pivot mounts are made for a wide range of popular rifle models including:

- Browning (A-Bolt, Euro Bolt, X-Bolt),
- Howa,
- Mauser,
- Remington,
- Sauer (80, 90, 202, 101),
- Steyr Manlicher,
- Winchester
- and many more.

Price Depending
on Model, from
£324.00

A Picatinny rail can also be mounted with your existing pivot system to facilitate night vision scopes and red dot sights.



RECKNAGEL

Part & Accessories

Recknagel produce a wide range parts and accessories such as Sling Swivels, Swivel Studs, Grip Caps, Sights, Triggers and Safety Mechanisms.

There are various sizes and model types for each type part, giving you a better choice. This is ideal for custom builds or specialist modification of your gun.

Recknagel Catalogue

The full range of Scope Mount hardware, Gun Furniture, Swivels and Parts are available from the Recknagel Catalogue.



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alanrhone.com
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[23220-0000]
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[23100-5010]
£25.00



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[22000-1000]
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ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts

Picatinny One-Piece Mount
30mm / 34mm / 36mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £309.00
Lever Fixing - £381.00



Picatinny One-Piece Mount Extended Version
30mm / 34mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £330.00
Lever Fixing - £402.00



Adjustable Inclination Mount

Adjust the MOA Elevation
from 0-70 MOA in
increments of 10 MOA
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Ring Options: 30 / 34 / 36mm

Tri-Nut Fixing
£505.00

Lever Fixing
£578.00



NEW

Now Available in MRAD
from 0-20 MRAD in
increments of 5 MRAD



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Ultra Lightweight

Ultra Lightweight Picatinny One-Piece
Starting from 122 g
30mm / 34mm Options
Nut Fixing - £216.00



NEW

Ultra Lightweight Picatinny One-Piece Extended Version
Starting from 146 g
1 Inch / 30mm / 34mm Options
Nut Fixing - £216.00



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Special Use

For S&B 5-20x50 PM II
Picatinny One-Piece
(Reduced Ring Spacing)
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £319.00
Lever Fixing - £392.00



ERATAC

Picatinny Ring Mounts Two-Piece

Picatinny Rings
30mm / 34mm Options
With UNIVERSAL-Interface

Nut Fixing - £237.00
Lever Fixing - £327.00



ERATAC

Ring with UNI-Interface

To fit to mid-tubes or objectives

1 Inch [03680-5726] - £78.00

30mm [03680-5730] - £78.00

34mm [03680-5734] - £78.00

36mm [03680-5736] - £78.00

48mm [03680-5748] - £109.00

56mm [03680-5756] - £109.00

57mm [03680-5757] - £109.00

62mm [03680-5762] - £109.00



Addons for UNI-Interface

Picatinny Rail, 35mm - £27.00
[0903-0008]

Picatinny Rail, 55mm - £29.00
[0905-0008]

Picatinny Side Adaptor - £53.00
[0913-0000]

Adaptor for Docter Sight (Centric) - £53.00
[0920-0005]

Adaptor for Aimpoint - £48.00
[0970-0000]

Bubble Level - £99.00
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ACI-Angle Cosine Indicator - £249.00
[0941-0000]

ACI-Bubble Level Adaptor - £99.00
[0940-0000]



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**SUPERIOR BARREL
CLEANING**

Cleaning and caring for your gun is a big part of accuracy, even if seen as a necessary evil. Cleaning should take as little time as possible. After all, one doesn't shoot for the pleasure of the subsequent cleaning.

VFG have developed a unique and easy to use cleaning system comprising calibre specific felt pellets. The pellets fit onto an adaptor on your regular cleaning rod.

The pellets are a close fit to the bore of your rifle and, when pushed through, expand to fit right into the bottom of the valley between the lands, ensuring no fouling is missed. In most cases, cleaning solvent is not required and is not recommended.

For stubborn copper fouling, VFG produce an 'intensive' felt pellet. This pellet is green in colour and is impregnated with phosphor bronze particles, the same material a phosphor bronze brush is made of. Easily and thoroughly removes copper fouling with no risk of damage to the bore of your rifle.

Cleaning is as simple as running the white felts through until clean, a couple of scrubs with the intensive felt, if required, and then once through with a light oil to protect from rust before storage. Easy and fast!



No need to buy a new rod!
Adaptors available for all popular
American and British rods

Dedicated rods also available if required.

Match Pocket Set 4-4.5mm - 167291

Pocket Pull Through - suitable for all calibres of rifle and shotgun. A plastic covered steel wire (the flexible "cleaning rod") and a grip disc are part of the set. £23.30



Cleaning Rod 4 - 4.5mm

1 Piece Steel Rod (£48.82) 66801

Cleaning Rod .22 - 6.5mm

1 Piece Alu Rod 354509 (£31.90) / 3 Piece Alu Rod 354440 (£36.80)

1 Piece Steel Rod 66889 (£61.33) / 3 Piece Steel Rod 66890 (£68.70)

Cleaning Rod 7mm and Over

1 Piece Alu Rod 354511 (£31.90) / 3 Piece Alu Rod 354442 (£36.80)

1 Piece Steel Rod 66893 (£63.79) / 3 Piece Steel Rod 66894 (£73.60)



VFG Cleaning Rod for 4-4.5mm / .22 - 6.5mm / 7mm and above Barrels (Approx. 910mm cleaning length)

VFG Adaptors for your existing Cleaning Rods

English Rods (e.g. Parker Hale) Female Thread

- Adaptor for .22 - 6.5mm (66807) - £4.91

- Adaptor for 7mm and Over (66806) - £4.91

US Rods (Hoppe's, Outers, etc.) Male Thread

- Adaptor for .22 - 6.5mm 7-32 (66809) - £4.91

- Adaptor for 7mm and Over 8-32 (66810) - £4.91



STANDARD CLEANING FELTS

These small felt pellets, which are calibre specific are used with the VFG Adaptor to clean your barrel. The felts screw onto the cleaning rod tip and the rod is then passed down the barrel to give a smooth and effective clean.

Available in both small box quantities and also bulk quantities of 500.

Calibre	Box (Qty.)	Code	Big Box	Code
4 - 4.5mm (.17)	£7.12 (100)	332066	-	-
.22	£7.24 (80)	331881	£26.99 (500)	331884
6 mm (.243)	£7.36 (50)	331885	£25.76 (500)	331948
6.5 mm	£7.36 (50)	331932	£31.89 (500)	331953
7 mm (.270)	£8.59 (50)	331954	£33.12 (500)	331956
7.5 mm (.30)	£8.59 (50)	331937	£33.12 (500)	331958
8 mm (.338)	£8.59 (50)	331959	£33.12 (500)	331960
9.3 mm (.380)	£7.36 (40)	331963	£39.25 (500)	331964
.375 (H&H Mag)	£9.82 (40)	331965	£41.71 (500)	331966
10.3mm (.40 Cal)	£7.36 (30)	331971	£41.71 (500)	331973
.44 [44 Mag]	£8.59 (30)	331974	-	-
.45 [45 Mag]	£8.59 (30)	331976	-	-



INTENSIVE CLEANING FELTS

Intensive felts, impregnated with phosphor bronze particles, for rapid, safe removal of copper fouling without the need for aggressive solvents.

Available in both small box quantities and also quantities of 500 in certain calibres.

Calibre	Box (Qty.)	Code	Big Box	Code
Intensive 4 - 4.5mm (.17)	£12.26 (100)	332068	-	-
Intensive .22	£8.59 (80)	331999	£35.57 (500)	332000
Intensive 6 mm (.243)	£12.26 (50)	662001	£55.20 (500)	332002
Intensive 6.5 mm	£12.26 (50)	332004	£61.33 (500)	332006
Intensive 7 mm (.270)	£13.49 (50)	332007	£63.79 (500)	332011
Intensive 7.5 mm (.30)	£13.49 (50)	332016	£63.79 (500)	332020
Intensive 8 mm (.338)	£13.49 (50)	332030	-	-
Intensive 9.3 mm (.380)	£14.72 (40)	332023	-	-
Intensive .375 (H&H Mag)	£14.72 (40)	332027	-	-
Intensive 10.3mm (.40 Cal)	£12.26 (30)	332029	-	-
Intensive .44 [44 Mag]	£12.26 (30)	332031	-	-
Intensive .45 [45 Mag]	£12.26 (30)	332034	-	-

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Steel Picatinny Rails

Made from hardened steel and available in different MOA options for all popular rifle models. The rails fit straight on to your rifle, with no gun smithing required and are pre-drilled for a perfect fit. Each rail comes complete with screws and wrench.

Available in the following Models:

Anschutz 54/64 (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Blaser R8/R93 (0 MOA) - £152.00
 Browning A-Bolt (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Browning BAR (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Browning X-Bolt Super Short (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Browning X-Bolt Short (0/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Browning X-Bolt Long (0/20 MOA) - £82.00
 BRNO 98 (0 MOA) - £82.00
 CZ 452/455 (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 CZ 527 (0 MOA) - £124.00
 CZ 550 Standard (0/20 MOA) - £124.00
 CZ 550 Magnum (0/20 MOA) - £124.00
 Howa 1500 Short (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £82.00
 Howa 1500 Long (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £82.00
 Remington 700 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Remington 700 Long (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £82.00
 Rossler Titan 6 (20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sabatti Rover Short (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Sabatti Rover Long (0/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sako A7 Short (0/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sako A7 Medium (0/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sako A7 Long (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Sako 75/85 X-Short (0 MOA) - £124.00
 Sako 75/85 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £124.00
 Sako 75/85 Medium (0/10/20 MOA) - £124.00
 Sako 75/85 Long (0/10/20 MOA) - £124.00



Sako 75/85
in X-Short, Short,
Medium and Long

Sako TRG 22/42 (10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sauer 100 / 101 (0 / 20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sauer 200 (10 MOA) - £82.00
 Sauer 202 (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Sauer 202 (0/10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Savage 12 Short (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Savage 12 Long (10 MOA) - £82.00
 Tikka T3 (0/10/20/30 MOA) - £82.00
 Weatherby Mark V Short (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Weatherby Vanguard Short (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Winchester 70 Short (10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Winchester 70 Long (10/20 MOA) - £82.00
 Winchester 70 X-Long (0 MOA) - £82.00
 Winchester XPR (0 MOA) - £82.00

Chrome Finished Picatinny Rails:

Howa 1500 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £96.00
 Howa 1500 Long (10/20 MOA) - £96.00
 Remington 700 Short (0/10/20 MOA) - £96.00
 Remington 700 Long (0/10/20 MOA) - £96.00
 Tikka T3 (0/10/20 MOA) - £96.00
 Sako 75/85 (0 MOA) - £138.00

Picatinny Rings - Fixed (Steel or Ergal)

The picatinny rings in diameters:
 1 inch, 30mm, 34mm, 35mm,
 36mm and 40mm.



Steel/Ergal from £111.00

Lightweight Alloy from £82.00

Picatinny Rings - QD

These steel picatinny rings come
 in 30mm diameter and 8mm
 or 12mm height options.



£159.00

75mm Rear Extension



EXTENDED Sako 75/85 X-Short (0 MOA) - £166.00
 EXTENDED Sako 75/85 Short (0 MOA) - £166.00
 EXTENDED Sako 75/85 Medium (0 MOA) - £166.00
 EXTENDED Browning A-Bolt 3 (0 MOA) - £106.00
 EXTENDED Browning X-Bolt (0 MOA) - £106.00
 EXTENDED Mosier M12 (0 MOA) - £106.00
 EXTENDED Sauer 100 / 101 (0 MOA) - £106.00
 EXTENDED Tikka T3 / T3X (0 MOA) - £106.00

Quick Release Mounts for Picatinny

Precision made quick release mounts designed to fit onto the picatinny system. The various options allow you to secure a variety of scopes onto your existing picatinny rail, whether it be a ring mounted day scope or a rail mounted scope such as Zeiss or Swarovski rail.

QD Picatinny Mount - Rings

Simple to fit, attaches straight to your picatinny rail. The ring mount is ideal for day scopes. Available in various heights:
 1" Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
 30mm Rings in 2.5mm / 5mm / 7.5mm
 34mm Rings in 6.5mm / 8mm
 36mm Rings in 5mm

£322.00



QD Picatinny Mount - Extended Picatinny

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Extension 95mm
Total Rail Length 175mm

QD Picatinny Mount for Zeiss Rail Scope

Also available in:
 • Schmidt & Bender Rail
 • Swarovski Rail

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Also fits the Thor HD and Mars HD

£303.00



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Fits Blaser models
R8 & R93



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Fits Blaser models
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Fits Blaser
models
R8 & R93



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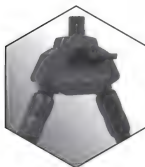
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The 25mm Hawke red dot in action



Tim Finley gets to grips with some red dot sights from Hawke to see how fast he can go

I shoot a lot of practical/mini rifle as well as three gun competitions, so I have used quite a few red dot sights, lots of different types and makes. I have found closed tube red dots better for me than the reflex types as I do my shooting outdoors.

There are different types of my favoured red dots tube sights and it all comes down to the size of the objective lens - 20, 25 and 30mm. Hawke makes all three of these objective lens sizes but the question is, which size is the best for the fast-paced shooting I do?

For years, I have used a well know 25mm diameter red dot but feel I need to up my game. So, I decided to test some new Hawke red dots as well as compare their objective lens sizes, to see if they could make a real difference to my shooting, in practical terms.

Hawke makes two dedicated AR platform red dots. They are from the Endurance RD range and feature digital brightness level systems, rather than a click-stop rotary dial type. The 25mm sight currently on my AR also uses a digital system, but to be honest the Hawke one is far superior. It's just so hard to turn my current unit off! You have to push both the up and the down buttons in very hard for five seconds, just to turn the dot off. Hawke's way is just to press the down button for two seconds, simple.

Hawke supply a low Weaver/Picatinny mounting base as well as a raised one to suit the AR

platform, so the sight can line up with any open sights fitted. I went for the more expensive 25 and 30mm Endurance range but I also used a 20mm Vantage red dot, as Hawke doesn't make a 20mm objective Endurance model.

Time to test

For the testing, I used my GSG-5 .22 rimfire rifle. I started practical shooting with it back in 2009, winning many mini rifle competitions with it. When I put each Endurance unit on, I found I could still use the open sights on the GSG-5, I really liked that feature. The riser sight base is hollow and there are four, angled cutouts on each side of the riser to let light in and to reduce weight. It's a great design element that I only cottoned onto during fitting. For mounting, there is a quick-release lever clamping system. The Endurance sights just keep getting better and better! The red dot size



Note the finger-friendly adjustment dials under the dust caps of this Endurance model



RESULTS

Sight

Vantage 20mm
Endurance 25mm
Endurance 30mm
Well-known 25mm

Field of View in our tests (mm)

840
760
1220
900

My results
FI results

20mm Vantage
7.61 seconds
7.91 seconds

25mm ED
7.97 seconds
8.03 seconds

30mm ED
6.38 seconds
6.65 seconds



Both the Hawke Endurance red dots have quick-release levers, this is the 30mm version fitted on the GSG-5



Hawke even lighten the riser mount by cutting slots in it

is 3 MOA for better accuracy and is my preference over 5 MOA.

The test would be at 7m with a 1-to-5 drill. There are two types of this practice drill, using either three or five targets. The best sight test would be with five targets. You start on the left hand one with a single shot, then shoot T2, back to T1, then T3, then back to T1, then T4, back to T1, then to T5 and back to T1. Finally, it's back down T4, 3, 2, 1. 15-rounds in total and a fantastic test of a red dot sight. The start position is

with rifle angled at 45°, pointed downwards under target number one, but I would be looking at the target so would have to get a sight picture on target one before I could start shooting, again a test of the red dot acquisition.

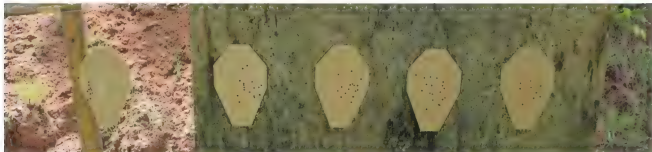
I used the smallest IPSC mini rifle targets to ensure that I had to find and aim at each 160 x 260mm board. Using the bigger, classic size targets would have been a test of me, not the sights and their objective lens size. To further ratify the results, I added

another tester to make sure it was not just me. The other shooter had a real H&K 9mm firing SD as one of the weapons he had access to back in the day. He is currently serving as a firearms instructor (FI) for a Government agency. He was just as keen to see what the results of the test would be as I was.

The 30mm Endurance is 55-grams heavier than the 25mm version and its sight picture is 125% bigger than the 20mm sight. Would this make all the difference? We measured the field of view (FOV) on the targets we were using and at the range we tested at, which was 7 yards. FOV is as it sounds, the distance you can see from one edge of the sight picture to the other.

Details

The Hawke Endurance RD sights are well made and have all of the features you need, I really rate their adjusting switches and functionality. They come with two mount heights and the highest one includes a quick-release lever. You also get an Allen key, lens cloth, instructions, a spare battery and a honeycomb screw-on front lens cover. The latter can be used to protect the objective lens



The 1-to-5 drill IPSC test targets laid out



The Endurance models come with a lens cloth, lower mount, instructions, CR2032 battery, Allen key and lens covers



Of the three sizes of IPSC targets, I chose the smallest, of course

while participating in Airsoft. You really get a hell of a lot for your money with the Hawke.

The 20mm Vantage comes fitted with screw-off turret caps that feature a raised ridge. Once removed, the ridge on the cap can be slotted into the grooves found on the elevation and windage dials, making adjustment/zeroing easier. Very clever. There are 11 brightness settings on the red dots.

The Endurance has finger-friendly dials under its screw-off dust caps. Both have rubber lens caps and run off CR2032 3v batteries. One odd thing the test uncovered was that the objective size of the 20mm Vantage was 24mm and the 25mm Endurance was 20mm when measured at the very end of the sight, due to the wide ring at the front.

After lots of runs and many magazines of 15-rounds down range, I averaged the results in

seconds (See Table). To be clear, we both shot with both eyes open, the sight body still masks the target you are moving to even with both eyes open. We both got more or less the same times, so it proved it was down to how fast we were picking up the next target for each different sight.

The Hawke Endurance 25mm is considerably lighter than the 30mm, so if you are looking to keep the weight of the rifle down it's a great choice. I'd be fitting the Endurance 25mm to my GSG-5 as I could still use the open sights as well. The 30mm objective was a revelation over the 20 and 25mm objective lens

sizes and really did speed up our shooting. The FI was eyeing up the Hawke Endurance 30mm as he currently has a 25mm red dot on his .22 Mini Rifle AR platform.

We proved with real-life results that a larger, clearer sight picture has an effect on how fast you can go. We both surmised that the brain picks out the next target faster with the bigger FOV, so knows where it's going sooner, whatever the scientific reason. The 30mm red dot was the fastest of all for both of us, by over a second.

Thanks to Jamie at Hawke for help in the production of this article. **GM**



Both of the Hawke Endurance red dots, note the size difference

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Hawke Vantage Red Dot
Model Number: 12 102
Magnification: 1x
Object Diameter: 20mm
Dot Diameter: 3 MOA
Weight: 120grams
Length: 74mm
Price: £79

Name: Hawke Endurance RD
Model number: 12 127
Magnification: 1x
Object Diameter: 25mm
Dot size: 3 MOA
Weight: 185-grams
Length: 70mm
Height (High Mount): 70mm
Height (Low Mount): 55mm
Price: £139

Name: Hawke Endurance RD
Model number: 12 128
Magnification: 1x
Object Diameter: 30mm
Dot Size: 3 MOA
Weight: 240-grams
Length: 90mm
Height (High Mount): 75mm
Height (Low Mount): 64mm
Price: £169

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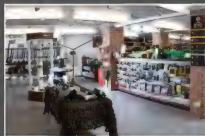
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Such a LIGHTWEIGHT

The A400 series of gas-operated, semi-automatic shotguns from Beretta really needs no introduction. They are good quality and are importantly reliable, plus they handle and shoot nicely too. The Ultralite model featured here is right up my alley as when I am out with a shotgun, I am usually after squirrels, rabbits and pigeons in thick woodland, so to me, a light and short 12-gauge with a 2+1 capacity is ideal.

The strong alloy action of the A400 series incorporates a rotating locking head and self-regulating, gas-operated system that handles an amazing array of shot weights and charges. On this model, Beretta has fitted a polymer trigger guard and forend tip as well as a 6mm carbon fibre rib to help lighten the load.

All in all, a very useable and highly manoeuvrable shotgun, let's see how she shoots.

Furniture

As the name would suggest, the Ultralite's stock is made to be slim

and lightweight. It's a bit shorter than I was expecting, though semi's usually are. This did not distract from the looks or handling as it's a lovely little semi, weighing only 2.7 kg with the 26" barrel fitted.

The wood is dark, straight-grained walnut and has a really nice oil finish with a semi-rubbed matte look. I really like it due to its practicalities in the field. The forend is only just wider than the action walls and has a well-defined top scalloped section that acts as an almost full-length finger groove for additional grip. The sides and bottom section are finely chequered and underneath there is the obligatory Beretta logo, which is incorporated into the design.

The pistol grip shows three separate chequered panels that increase in size. At its base, a carbon fibre Beretta logo has been inserted and goes some way to cementing the Ultralite's theme. There are no palm swells but you can adjust cast and comb height via inserts between the pistol grip and action face.

There was a slight right-hand cast and nice low comb that perfectly positioned your eye right down the rib section. To add a bit to the design, there is a small scalloped section that runs parallel with the bottom edge of the pistol grip and along the stock.

The recoil pad is Beretta's Microcore model. It's slim yet very effective at dampening recoil, plus it does not impede you when the gun is being mounted. The pad thickness does mean the length of pull (LOP) is short at 13.75" but it does not affect handling or your swing at all. In fact, I really want to buy a few of these recoil pads as they would be very good on some rifles of mine!

Being a rifleman, one other feature I appreciate is the supplied and fitted sling swivels, as these make the Ultralite even lighter when shouldered while walking around the fields.

Barrel/chokes

The A400 Ultralite is available with either a short 26" barrel (on test) or

Bruce Potts

reviews a
quick-handling
semi-auto from
Beretta; the
A400 Ultralite

My type of shotgun, a semi-auto that is both lightweight and super reliable with all the loads tested

a more standard 28" tube. I much prefer the shorter one as it means the overall length of the Ultralite is only 46.0", making for great vermin or hide gun. The barrels are very hard wearing and are manufactured from Beretta's famous 'Steelium', thus

"It achieves reliable, superfast cyclic rates with a wide range of different cartridge types and loads"

ensuring a great strength to weight ratio. Perfect for the little Ultralite on test then! Externally, the barrel shows a high polished blue/black finish.

Sighting is via a single red dayglo element at the muzzle and the five larger vents between the rib and barrel ensure good heat dispersal. All models feature the Optima-Bore chambered for 3" cartridges as well as the Optima HP choke system. Three flush-fit, steel proofed chokes are supplied.

Action and trigger and safety

The A400 uses the Blink operating system, which as its name suggests, is an ultra-fast bolt setup driven by a gas-operated piston. It achieves reliable, superfast cyclic rates with a wide range of different cartridge types and loads. The whole action is black anodized, aluminium-alloy and features a laser engraving of woodcock in flight. Up top, there are dovetails for optional sight use.

The A400 uses a polished blued bolt body with a rotating head that secures the two large bolt locks into the stainless-steel bolt carrier and rear of the barrel, thus ensuring opening only when the gas pressure is correct. The large single claw extractor to the

right face of the bolt takes care of ejection and the black anodised 0.75", grooved bolt handle is quite small but did not hamper operations.

The bolt locks back on the last round and there is a small blued button located on the right-hand side of the action which is the bolt release. There is also a magazine cut off control on the left-hand side of the action. This allows you to unload, then load a single cartridge without the gun feeding from the magazine. Safety-wise, there is a simple triangular push button located towards the front of the trigger guard. Push from the right to FIRE and from the left for SAFE.

The well-proportioned trigger guard with a slightly enlarged front edge gives good access to the smooth, brightly polished, chromed finished trigger, which breaks cleaning at 4.85 lbs.

In the field

Because this was a lightweight, I really wanted to see if it could handle the lighter loads, like the Pro-Fibre 24-gram or Blue Diamond loadings. We use these a lot for general close-range vermin work as the recoil is light and the patterns are superb. I even tried



(Above) The gas-operated system worked 100% with loads down to 24-grams, very useful (Left) It has a nicely checkered forend and vented tip for exhaust gases (Right) The chromed lifter manipulates the cartridges with ease, note the bolt release and safety catch





It's quite short but I really like the simplicity of the dark walnut stock on the Ultralite



Detail of the carbon fibre insert in the pistol grip

out the 12-gauge subsonic cartridges as I had a suitable adaptor for the A12 A-TEC shotgun sound moderator.

We started with some 28-gram, #7.5, Hull VLR subsonic cartridges which use a 65mm case and a fibre wad. In use, they were so close to cycling perfectly, but not quite. The fired case just couldn't quite go far enough back to eject and pick up the next round, but it's a big ask for a semi to operate on subs. The 24-gram fibre and plastic wadded loads were superb and they all shot 100% reliably.

With a $\frac{3}{4}$ choke fitted for testing, the Pro-Fibre shot 24-grams of #7.5 shot and achieved a total of 205 strikes at 30 yards. There were 52 inner strikes, while the remaining 153 pellets were still inside the 30" circle.

Next up was the Gamebore Pigeon Extreme with its load of 34-grams of #5 shot, a hard hitter but really manageable in the Ultralite. We had a total of 178 pellet strikes, with 61 inner hits and 117 pellets evenly spread on the pattern board. This



The Carbon fibre rib is a nice touch of class and cuts down on weight too, note the Red dayglo front sight

combination and the Ultralite's fast handling is deadly for hide shooting.

We also tried some NSI, Blue Diamond and Imperial Game just to see how they functioned, again, not a flaw and perfect cycling.

For a steel load, we choose some Eley Pro Eco Steels. Using a $\frac{3}{4}$ choke again, the pattern boards revealed that the 32-gram #5 load produced a nice tight pattern, as expected from a steel loading. Coverage was even and there was a total of 170 pellet strikes, with 48 hits to the

inner 15" and 122 hits around the periphery. Eley also makes a clay version of this round with #7 steel shot in a 28-gram loading, which would be a great lead-free option for close range, small vermin work.

Conclusions

I really like this gun, and I think that with a few more boxes of 12-gauge through it, it would loosen up a bit. Semi's do that and perhaps those subs would then work. But that's just my fancy, all other loadings shot without fault and the patterns were all well centred and on the bead, so to speak. The Blink system is fast, allowing a really fast follow up shot or more and to me, the 26" option is perfect as a do-anything, anywhere type of 12-gauge semi. **GM**



Note the Woodcocks and the magazine cut off lever, which is set into the action wall

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

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Action: Gas-piston operation
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Chamber: 3"
Weight: 2.7kg (28" barrel 2.75kg)
Stock: Walnut Sporter
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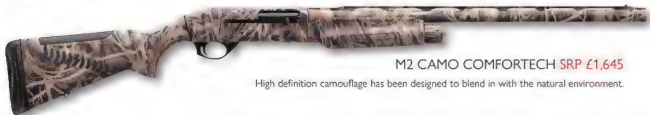
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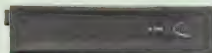
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The Bobcat uses an under lever action, here you can see it in its open position

Something DIFFERENT



Tim Finley tries out an under lever shotgun called the Bobcat

Shotguns come in all shapes and sizes.

We are accustomed to semi-automatic and pump-action guns in the UK, as they are the norm. What is not the norm, is the under lever shotgun.

An organisation at the forefront of under lever shotguns in the UK is Practical Shooting Supplies (PSS). Their second foray into bringing this type of shotgun to our shores is from Barathrum, a manufacturer located in Konya, Turkey. They are a large outfit with a big factory, 10,000 m² to be exact! 95% of their products are exported and can be found in more than 14 countries worldwide.

PSS approached them and asked them to produce a shotgun for them. The gun was assigned the name the Bobcat and the model number FQ-UL12. UL indicates the under lever action and 12, the calibre (12-gauge). FQ stands for something else, Q meaning Quick. The FQ brand belongs to PSS and the logo can be seen emblazoned on both sides of the UL12's action. Barathrum uses 4140 hardened steel for their barrels and 7075 aluminium for their receivers.

Options

The Bobcat is based on Barathrum's existing 12-gauge UL action, which



Other than the standard 24" tube, there are three other barrels available; 26", 13 1/2" and 18"

they use on the LV-36 hunting shotgun in 36-gauge. It incorporates an under-barrel magazine and working the action ejects a fired cartridge and then, on closing, inserts a new one from the magazine into the empty chamber.

The standard Bobcat comes with a 24" barrel and a set of chokes (Full, Half and Cylinder), plus you can also buy a spare 26" barrel. It has a magazine capacity of two, making it a 2+1 or three-shot shotgun that can be bought using a shotgun certificate.

If you have a Firearms Certificate (FAC), then you have the option to buy either a 13 1/2" or 18" barrel. The latter overhangs the magazine by 76mm/3", while the former is so short that

the magazine tube extends past the muzzle! The spare barrels cost £175, just make sure you have a slot on your certificate. Also, the capacity of the magazine tube can be increased from two to five rounds via an extension and, in fact, the extended tube is supplied at no extra cost if the gun is ordered initially in FAC configuration.

Being a shotgun, all the barrel lengths feature a brass bead front sight as standard. However, the Bobcat also comes with an 11mm dovetailed, 145mm long, optical sight rail machined into the top of the action. This means that you can fit a red dot sight or even a scope to use with solid slug. It really is a versatile gun with lots of potential uses.



The under lever in its closed position, note the safety catch



Here you can see the loading port, shell lifter and the bright red magazine follower



The FQ-UL12 features an 11mm sight rail, which can be used to mount a red dot sight

Controls

The trigger weight of the FQ-UL12 came in at 2.3 kg on my electronic gauge and it was crisp as well as smooth in operation, however, it felt a lot lighter than that in use. The safety catch is located directly behind the trigger, simply push it in from the left to set on SAFE and from the right for FIRE, which is indicated by a red ring around the circumference of the button. When set on safe it locks off the trigger.

The FQ-UL12's magazine follower is anodised bright red in colour to let the shooter know when the magazine is empty. The loading gate is ideal for fast reloads and allows the shotgun to be topped up even when cocked. Also, it doesn't have a mega sharp 'fork' on the end of the gate, so is not a thumb trapper.

In use, I found that the lever was a bit stiff out of the box and that I needed a glove on my firing hand to act as a bit of padding on the back of my fingers. An alternative option would be to wrap the bottom of the lever in padded material, say leather.

Manually operated

Being a manually operated shotgun means you can shoot lighter loads than semi-automatic shotguns, which may

be a factor in choosing an FQ-UL12. In addition to this, the UL mechanism means that the firing hand operates the reloading mechanism while the front hand stays on the gun when aiming and shooting, thus keeping the gun pointing exactly where you want it. With a pump-action, the aiming is compromised by the fact you have to rack the slide to reload the gun, potentially making a UL better for practical shotgun shooting than a pump.

Furniture

The wooden furniture shows a deep, rich brown stain and for a better hold, there are twin panels on each side of the grip and forend with one showing chequering and the other stippling. Not only does this arrangement work really well, but it adds a bit of class and is a design touch that shows Barathrum really care about their products and how they look as well as function. The butt shows a rubber butt pad to help with the recoil and the gun comes with sling swivels fitted front and back.

Conclusion

At £599 for the standard 24" FQ-UL12, it's not expensive at all, especially considering the quality. It's a well-built shotgun that's solid and reliable.



The rear stock is well designed, note the stippled and chequered panels on the grip

I really enjoyed shooting it as it was a nice change from my pump-action and semi-automatic Section 1 (FAC rated) shotguns. As with all under levers, it needs a bit of polishing to slicken it up, but I found the action got smoother and faster in the time I had it. The more I shot it the better it got.

If you are looking for an alternative to the run of the mill pump-action shotguns then the UL has a lot to offer, and Western fans should like it too. The real cherry on the cake is the look and shootability of it with the 18" barrel. It just looks right and feels and handles as good as it looks. The 18" Bobcat is already a best seller and I can see why.

It's worth mentioning that you cannot buy a pump-action or semi-automatic shotgun with less than a 24" barrel as a shotgun or as a Section 1 firearm in anything other than an under lever format.

Thanks to Richard at Practical Shooting Supplies for help with the production of this article. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name:	FQ-UL12 BOBCAT
Manufacturer:	Barathrum
Action:	Under Lever
Calibre:	12-gauge
Chamber:	75mm
Length of Pull:	14.56"
Weight:	3.3kg
Barrel length:	24"
Overall Length:	38.19 (FAC 18" barrel)
Magazine Capacity:	2+1
	Shotgun cert, 5+1 Sec 1 FAC
Stock:	Walnut
Price:	£599
Extras:	Spare barrel (£175)
Contact:	Practical Shooting Supplies www.practicalshootingsupplies.co.uk





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Time Well Spent



John Norris takes a look at what's been happening during lockdown

At the time of writing it has been 18 months since the outbreak of COVID-19, which developed into a pandemic leading to governments around the world imposing 'lockdowns' in their countries to try and defeat the virus. We all know what it has meant to everyone, but now, with vaccines and following regulations, we are at the stage where things are beginning to return to normality. The move is slow but it has begun and looks set, fingers crossed, to continue.

Looking good

Museums and theatres are reopening, people are on the move and organisers of militaria fairs, vehicle shows and re-enactment events are releasing dates. All this good news is a great relief to

everyone and we can now make plans to visit places. We knew it would come to an end and news of planned events is appearing on social media sites. From the small local events to the larger shows, things continue to look good. For example, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) has announced that its sites, which includes Duxford, The Cabinet War Rooms and HMS Belfast, are open to the public. The site at Duxford in Cambridgeshire has already hosted a Flying Day event in July, with reduced numbers and limited facilities to minimise risk.

The Duxford website (www.iwm.org.uk/airshows) announced the news that the Battle of Britain Air Show, scheduled for 18th-19th September, is pending, but other dates for Flying Days in August

are confirmed. However, to avoid disappointment, keep watching the website for any changes. All IWM sites advise booking tickets in advance online to help the staff on-site at events. It's all understandable and to have something to look forward to is, at least, better than nothing.

What else?

The Tank Museum at Bovington in Dorset is also open and announcing a full schedule of events continuing right to the end of the year and even looking ahead into 2022. Check out their website (www.tankmuseum.org). Like other locations, visitor numbers will be reduced, so book your tickets online for Tankfest, 17th-20th September.



The bonnet of an Austin Champ opened to show details of the engine



A very nice paint job has been applied to this 'immy'



Andy Norman's brilliant mobile display built on a trailer unit



This work in progress attracted a lot of attention

If the situation continues to improve, then as the saying goes, the show will go on. This will include a model show from 4th-5th September, a militaria fair and auction on the 6th November and even a Christmas Fair 27th-28th November. There really is something for everybody going on at the Tank Museum, which is more great news.

The Cobbaton Combat Collection at Chittlehampton at Umlerleigh in North Devon has announced that it is open for business 6 days a week, Sunday to Friday, with visiting hours between 10 am and 4 pm. For more info visit www.cobbatoncombat.co.uk.

When enthusiasts move around and start visiting locations they will, no doubt, notice a lot of changes. Some will be obvious, but it will all be for the best and keep interest alive. New museums have opened, such as the Royal Logistic Corps Museum near Winchester, as mentioned last month, which is well worth a visit. New exhibitions and displays will have been created and groups that put

on gun firing displays at sites such as Nothe Fort in Weymouth and Fort Nelson, near Portsmouth, will return all refreshed and ready to do their stuff.

It's showtime

Military vehicle shows are also starting again, such as the one-day event held on 27th June at Haselbury Mill, Somerset. The site where this annual local show is hosted is very small, but they manage to pack a lot into the site, which includes militaria traders. The number of vehicles on site was limited due to restrictions but after arriving and parking their vehicles in a static line-up, visitors could freely wander around.

Vehicles this year included a Panhard AML60, belonging to the French Army Re-enactment Group (FARG), Austen K2Y ambulance, GMC trucks, 'Green Goddess' fire engine and an unusual heavyweight Leyland 'Hippo' truck used in WWII. From the condition of some vehicles, it was clear to see that owners had spent a lot of time during lockdown doing maintenance and refurbishment. A couple of vehicles had their engine bonnets raised for inspection and owners found themselves the centre of attention and kept busy with questions. The traders' stalls attracted their fair share of attention with a mixture of curious visitors and genuine collectors keen to pick up a few items.

A handful of collectors-cum-re-enactors had put on displays of items, which included lots of weapons. People were glad to be able to visit a show like this and the look on their faces was one of relief at being able to get out again. The static displays also showed that collectors had spent time renovating and sorting out items as well as devising new ways of

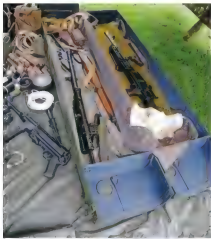
showing the equipment. One collector used an air-drop container as a display case to show weapons used in WWII.

Andy Norman is a Somerset-based vehicle owner, a serious collector of militaria and re-enactor, wearing a British uniform to drive his M3 White Scout Car. He used the show to unveil a static display with a difference. It depicted a room in a farmhouse littered with military equipment as though it was being used as a radio and headquarters base. Webbing, personal kit and weapons were lying around as though the soldiers had just popped into another room. The walls were encrusted with soot from the oil lamps and items of furniture and civilian possessions were scattered about.

Andy explained that the display was all contained inside a trailer with drop sides and was meant to represent a typical farmhouse that an army unit would have used during WWII. He bought the trailer on eBay and had the idea of using it as a mobile display that he could tow to events behind his car. Wooden boards produced the right effect and using items from his extensive collection, he has created a mobile museum that looks authentic.

To come

If what was on show at Haselbury Mill as a small event is an example of the standard of display achieved by enthusiasts during lockdown, then it raises the question: 'What else can we expect to see when the big shows start again?' Indeed, what does lie in store for us? All the surprises awaiting the expectant visitors can only be guessed at but we can be sure that whatever is revealed, will be incredible and show how time was well spent in creating new and wonderful displays for an appreciative public. **AM**



WWII weapons displayed in an airborne container



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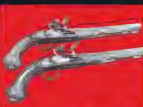
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An artist's impression of the duel. In reality, neither man took deliberate aim



John Norris talks about the Duke of Wellington's duel with the 10th Earl of Winchilsea

In 1819, after a military career spanning almost 30 years, the Duke of Wellington entered British politics, being appointed to the post of Master General of Ordnance in the Conservative Government of Lord Liverpool. Only 9 years later, with political experience behind him, Wellington was elected Prime Minister in 1828. The position brought him new political adversaries who were keen to debate and argue against his decisions.

Indeed, it was not long before he was facing George Finch-Hatton the 10th Earl of Winchilsea (sometimes written as Winchelsea) who was opposed to his proposal for conceding to Catholic emancipation, which would give them the right to sit in Parliament. It seems strange to think that voters could elect Catholic politicians, but due to their religious beliefs in a Protestant country, they were barred from taking their seats. Wellington's decision overturned that and, in the process, gained outspoken opponents one of whom was Lord Winchilsea, who went further

than the rest and wrote a series of defamatory letters to the Standard newspaper, in which he expressed offensive opinions about Wellington. In these letters he declared that in allowing Catholics to take their elected seats in Parliament, Wellington must have some ulterior motion, stating that, 'under the cloak of some coloured show of zeal for the Protestant religion' he [Wellington] was planning 'an insidious design for the infringement of our liberties and the introduction of Popery into every department of the State'.

Such an action could not be ignored and Wellington wrote to Winchilsea requesting an apology. Letters were exchanged between



The Duke of Wellington was a well-known figure in Regency England

the two men and throughout the course of correspondence Winchilsea remained firm in his convictions to which Wellington responded by demanding, 'satisfaction for conduct which a gentleman has a right to require, and which a gentleman never refuses to give'. In effect, Wellington had 'called out' Lord Winchilsea and was demanding a duel to settle the affair of honour. Wellington was known to be opposed to duelling, but here he



Loading a pistol ready for a duel



Recreated impression of a duellist with his Second

was showing how far he had been provoked to issue such a challenge. Winchelsea had no military experience but nevertheless accepted the challenge and the two men agreed to meet at Battersea Fields in London on Sunday, 21st March 1829.

Marksmanship

Wellington had joined the 73rd Regiment of Foot in 1787 at the age of 18, going on to serve in many campaigns. His final battle was Waterloo in 1815, where his victory over Napoleon made him the hero of the age. Yet, despite all his military service, he was alone in believing himself a creditable shot. His status meant he was often invited to attend shooting weekends and it was during one such trip in 1820 he told Lady Shelly, 'I have been shooting pretty well lately'. Unfortunately, his claims did not match his ability, which was so bad it terrified Lady Shelly's young daughter. When he shot Lady Shelly's laundry

woman, Wellington made a token reparation payment of one guinea for the wound. To this Lady Shelly remarked to her servant, 'this ought to be the proudest moment of your life. You have had the distinction of being shot by the great Duke of Wellington'.

In 1823, at Wherstead Park in Suffolk, Lord Granville became another victim of Wellington's poor aim when he received facial wounds. Gamekeepers across the country frequently found themselves having to take cover from Wellington's guns and Captain Thomas Browne, who had known Wellington since the Spanish Campaign, considered his former commanding officer, 'a very indifferent shot.'

The dual

According to duelling protocol seconds were appointed, with Sir Henry Hardinge representing Wellington and Lord Falmouth representing Winchelsea. A doctor had to be in attendance



Re-enactors showing how close duellists stood to each other

BOOKSHELF



TITLE: Wilson's War
AUTHOR: John Spencer
PUBLISHER: Helion & Company, Oxford
ISBN: 9781912866274
PRICE: £35.00

Despite holding the influential position of Director of Military Operations during WWI, a role which placed him at

the 'top table' with the General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson is an almost unknown figure apart from those students of the Great War. This book lays out his character, abilities and the part he played in the way the war was conducted, to introduce him to a wider readership. Not always the most amiable of characters, Wilson nonetheless helped steer the war and smooth differences between the military and politicians as well as with the French Allies. He died in 1922, aged 58, having served on many campaigns spanning a career of 40 years in the army, which few others could meet. As this extensively researched book tells, he was a controversial figure never afraid to disagree with either the military or politicians. Read this and you will wonder how the war would have ended without Wilson's involvement.



TITLE: Artillery of the Napoleonic Wars
AUTHOR: Kevin F. Kiley
PUBLISHER: Frontline Books, Barnsley, South Yorkshire
ISBN: 9781848329539
PRICE: £35.00

From expressions such as 'abattage des bois' to 'Zeughaus', if artillery of

the French army under Napoleon Bonaparte is your field of interest, then, this encyclopaedic reference work is an absolute must to have on your bookshelf. The compilation of such detailed work could only be achieved through meticulous and thorough research, which can be used to answer any question on artillery between 1792 and 1815. Well illustrated with technical drawings showing barrels at various stages of construction, gun carriages, ammunition and even considers Congreve's rockets. With over 40 pages of Artillery Tables as a 'ready reference', modellers and war gamers will find this book a useful guide, also. If anything has been left out, and from the looks of things nothing has, then it will be of such inconsequence that it will not alter the fact this is a first-class book on artillery during the Napoleonic Wars.



Pistol for sale, of the type possibly used for duelling with a hexagonal barrel



A selection of pistols for sale to collectors, some of which could have been used for duelling

and this was John Hume, who was Wellington's physician. It was only at this point that it was discovered that neither man owned pistols and it fell to Dr. Hume to supply the weapons. Hume recognised Wellington as he rode to the meeting point who greeted the doctor with friendly familiarity: 'Well, I daresay you little expected it was I who wanted you here.' To which Hume replied: 'Indeed, my Lord. You are the last person I should have expected here: Wellington was anxious to get the whole matter concluded as quickly as possible, so that he may return to the normal proceedings of his daily routine.'

Whilst waiting for the arrival of Lord Winchilsea, Wellington leapt over a small ditch and gave instructions to his Second, 'now then, Hardinge, look sharp and step out the ground, I have no time to waste! A distance of 12 paces was measured out at which point Wellington called out his objection to where Winchilsea would be placed: 'Damn it, don't stick him up so near the ditch. If I hit him, he will tumble in.' Hardinge was responsible for loading the pistols, but he was having great difficulty because he had only one hand, having lost the other during the Battle of Waterloo. As the doctor in attendance, Hume would normally avoid direct involvement in a duel, but now he found himself loading the pistols.

When all was ready and both men were in position, Hardinge gave the command for the men to fire. Winchilsea's pistol arm remained by his side. Wellington raised his pistol and deliberately aimed wide and fired. Winchilsea responded by firing in the air, an act known as delouping when duelling. After the duel, the two men exchanged brief correspondence and the affair was concluded when the two men departed the field with the same 'cold civility' as they had met.

That should have been an end to the affair but the newspapers saw a sensational story in the duel, with *The Times* of London stating: 'The Duke of Wellington is the last man on earth who should be called upon to defend himself by duel against any attack on his public character.' The

Morning Herald proclaimed that Wellington's actions had thrown London into 'great ferment'. With each of the men holding high political office, they should have known better than to engage in an act that could have resulted in dire consequences had either been killed by their opponent. The final word on the matter was left to King George IV, with whom Wellington had an audience at Windsor Castle later on the day of his duel, where he is understood to have said that he was delighted with the duel and that he would have done the same. The fact that duelling was not legal in the country meant the two men had broken the law, but its practice was unofficially tolerated.

Choose your weapon

Some gunsmiths, such as Durs Egg and Joseph Manton,

developed duelling pistols into a specialised design with distinct external hexagonal barrels, a spur on the trigger guard and the grip shaped for a better fit and balance. Matched pairs could be purchased in elaborate cases with all the necessary accoutrements. Today, these pistols are highly collectable items to weapon enthusiasts and fetch good prices for individual weapons, while cased sets are high value. Mostly there is no proof attached to these weapons to say if they were ever used for the purpose for which they were intended. It's usually the design and gunsmith's name which makes them appealing to put in a collection. Unfortunately, the weapons used by Wellington and Winchilsea are believed to have disappeared as there is no known trace of them and the maker's name is not recorded.

As a historical fact, duelling is something which re-enactment groups depicting the Regency period have sometimes staged for the interest of visitors. Several members of a group will gather to recreate the duel, going through the whole process of loading the weapons, pacing out the distance and giving the order to fire. It's a colourful, if deadly, part of history and visitors find the whole thing fascinating. The most incredible part of it is that the pages of history record so many influential figures, including American presidents, who fought duels. **AM**



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Derek Landers takes a brief look at a reproduction of the carbine that was used by the losing side at the Battle of the Little Big Horn



The events of that fateful day in June 1876 have been discussed ever since and will continue to be far into the future. Blame for the defeat of the United States 7th Cavalry has been laid at the door of Custer himself, the Springfield rifle, poor ammunition, troops that were not combat-ready and the sheer overwhelming number of Indians. The truth probably lies in a combination of all factors, although the real truth of what happened on Last Stand Hill will never be known.

At the close of the Civil War, the US Army had thousands of muzzle-loading rifles, and by 1865 it was realised that breech loaders were the way forward. A cash-strapped Union was in no position to furnish new weapons to every soldier but a solution came in the form of Erskine Allin's design to convert the muzzle-loading rifles by simply replacing the breech portion of the barrel with a new section incorporating a 'trapdoor'. Early conversions were .50 calibre, both rimfire and centrefire, but by 1873 the Army had decided to standardise small arms at .45 calibre. This resulted in the .45 Colt cartridge for revolvers and the .45-70 for long guns.

Tender

Several manufacturers submitted rifles for testing and the final decision of the Army Ordnance Board favoured the Allin conversion, not least because the Armoury was already geared up

to produce this type, but also because it was deemed at least as strong, if not stronger, than the opposition. It's also a very simple system to operate, a feature taken into account when issuing to raw recruits.

The one shortcoming with the trapdoor mechanism, jamming of the extractor, was known to the testing board but a failure rate of 1-in-300 was not considered a major deficiency. Later archaeological examination of the battlefield would suggest that this failure rate could be nearer to 1-in-30. The copper-cased ammunition is often cited as a contributory factor in these failures, where the case head could be torn off during extraction.

While the .45-70 cartridge – with its 70-grains of black powder – was used for the infantry rifle with its 32½" barrel, a lighter powder charge of 55-grains (.45-55) was used in ammunition for the carbine, which was issued to mounted troops.

Pedersoli Impressions

My first impression of the Springfield Carbine is of a plain-looking rifle that places function above form. The one-piece walnut stock is plain with a satin finish that looks to be oiled. The breech block, or trapdoor, is case coloured with the rest of the metal being gloss black, with one exception. The 22" tapered barrel and receiver are fastened to the stock with a screw in the top tang and a band just in front of the rear sight. This band is held in place by a spring with a purple hue to it, which is not as strong as some that I have encountered, and the front band was easily removed when the need unexpectedly arose.

As per the originals, the trigger guard has a broad base and instead of being cast in unison with the bottom tang, is a separate entity that's fastened by two screws entering the 'legs' of the guard from inside the tang.

The left side of the stock has a bar and ring arrangement and



.45-70 throws a big pill, note the hammer



Open trapdoor, note the ejector stud at the rear



The rear sight in its raised position

when the carbine was not carried in a leather boot to the side to the saddle, this would be used to attach a sprung clip, which in turn was fastened to a leather strap. The whole ensemble would be worn over the trooper's shoulder and across his chest, an arrangement that I imagine would be cumbersome and uncomfortable.

Operation

The action on the Trapdoor is not the strongest of the big single-shot rifles but is a pleasure to use. The large percussion era hammer has four positions including the 'at rest' position when the gun has been fired. The first click is a 'safety' notch and at this position, the trapdoor cannot be opened, the second is half-cock and the third full-cock. To load the gun, the hammer should be put in the half-cock position so that you can lift the spring-loaded lever on the right side of the block and thus open it up to expose the breech. Slip in a cartridge and press the block down and it will snap shut. Pull the hammer back to full-cock and you are ready to go. The two-piece firing pin is located inside the breech block and strikes the primer at a slight angle rather than straight-on, but performed faultlessly throughout.

To unload, repeat steps one and two and as the breech block reaches the end of its travel it engages with a spur, which is the upper part of the spring-loaded ejector. This

shares the same hinge as the trapdoor, and this flips the empty case backwards when activated. At the rear end of the breech floor is a stud and when the case hits this it is flipped out of the action. When the trapdoor is closed for the next shot the extractor is pushed back into place. It was said that a well-trained soldier could put



An uncomfortable way to carry the rifle

BOOKSHELF



TITLE: Britain's Airborne Forces of WWII

AUTHOR: Mark Magreehan

PUBLISHER: Frontline Books, Barnsley, West Yorkshire

ISBN: 9781526779465

PRICE: £25.00

This book, written by a former serving member

of the Parachute Regiment, will be well received by collectors whose interests lay in wartime British airborne militaria. Military enthusiasts with other interests will find it equally fascinating, especially re-enactors depicting airborne units during WWII, with all the photographs to use as points of reference. The author has used an extensive range of items in his personal collection as the basis for many of the photographs, to demonstrate to collectors what can be achieved. To amass something approaching this level, though, takes a lot of time and dedication. This is a book that uses photographs and captions, rather than the text, to tell the history, and the formula works extremely well in this case.



TITLE: German Prisoners of the Great War

EDITED BY: Anne Buckley

PUBLISHER: Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley, West Yorkshire

ISBN: 9781526765291

PRICE: £25.00

During WWII there were numerous camps

established across Britain to accommodate German POWs, including Jersey and Dorchester in Dorset. Sadly, most of the evidence of their existence has disappeared but this book serves as a reminder of one, Raikeswood Camp, located near Skipton in Yorkshire. Files and other documents, including diaries of the time, have been carefully and painstakingly sifted through to give an insight into the daily life of German POWs, and the result is this detailed work. It is as much a social history as well as being military history, telling the stories of soldiers behind a different kind of wire away from the front line. The POWs routine and treatment, including how they were received by the local civilian population, is well told.



Detail of the saddle ring and bar



Here you can see the rear sight graduations



The broad head of the firing pin



Detail of the trigger and the wide guard it's housed in

three shots a minute on target with the Springfield.

Sights are very much true to the originals, with the rear being a tip-up ladder set in a stepped, winged base, the latter being fixed to the barrel with two screws. The steps are graduated 1 to 5 on the right wing, while the ladder is marked from 6 to 12. A strong spring holds the ladder firmly in place when raised. The one-piece front sight is a blade set atop a block that is soldered to the barrel. There is no lateral adjustment on either sight. A shallow groove is cut into the front on the breech block and the top of the receiver to permit you to see the rear sight's v-notch when at its lowest setting.

Oops!

Having a single-shot rifle of my own in this calibre, I always have some reloaded ammunition on hand, usually in two or three load variations, but generally using the same 405-grain, lead RNFP bullet. A light load of 12-grains of Trail Boss powder is adequate for a bit of plinking, but first up for this test was a load of 30-grains of IMR 4198 powder. Recoil was

fairly mild and the bullet was going where it was pointed more often than not if I did my part.

Mindful of the history of this carbine, it would have been amiss of me not to try some black powder loads. Unfortunately, all I had on hand was some Henry Krank fine powder, when I would have preferred their medium grade. Still, this action was designed for loads of 70-grains, so I figured that the carbine load of 55-grains would be OK, albeit with the fine powder, and loaded 20 cartridges. I only got to shoot five as after the fifth shot the trapdoor would not open. The spring-loaded catch was moving but the trapdoor was not budging.

Back on the workbench the barrel and receiver were taken out of the stock and I tapped the breech block hinge pin out. The trapdoor remained stuck, but a light tap on its rear with a small hammer and length of wood dowel did the trick. When the bits came out, the fired case remained in the breech and needed another tap with a ramrod to free it. Everything seemed fine so I cleaned it and set about putting it back together. It was then

that I learned you need at least three hands to hold the extractor against its spring while you try to locate the hinge pin! After 10 minutes of struggling, I called for help, with the consequence that my wife thinks she should now have 'Apprentice Gunsmith' added to her CV. The mechanism was re-assembled and everything worked as it should. Puzzled, I contacted Pedersoli and all they could come up with was that the fine powder may have generated a bit too much pressure.

Conclusion

It would be a further month before there was a rifle shoot at my outdoor club but then I got an unexpected chance to visit another

range, so off I went, albeit a little apprehensively. With a light load of 13-grains of Trail Boss behind the 405-grain bullet, the gun worked perfectly, so I went back to the IMR powder with the same bullet. 60 or so shots later, without a hitch, I figured there was no longer a problem and the gun was working exactly as it should. For good measure, I fired the rest of the 100 rounds I had brought with me. The trapdoor action is still one of my favourites and unless the Pedersoli opinion is correct, I am at a loss to explain the initial problem.

There are another couple of variations of this gun available, so check out the Henry Krank catalogue or website for more details. **am**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name: Pedersoli Springfield Trapdoor Carbine
Calibre: .45-70
Barrel Length: 22"
Overall Length: 41¼"
Length of Pull: 13¼"
Weight: 7¼ lbs
Price: £1335.00 (guide)
Contact: Henry Krank - www.henrykrank.com



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A		
AIR ARMS	93	
ALAN RHONE.....	118-125	
ANDREW BOTTOMLEY	148-149	
ANTIQUE ARMS & EXHIBITIONS.....	156	
ARTEMIS WEB	55	
ASI	29	
B		
BATTLE ORDERS.....	161	
BH STEEL TARGETS.....	116	
BLADES UK.....	58	
BLUE FOX GLADE.....	50	
BRATTONSOUND	84	
BROWNING INTERNATIONAL 11, 77, 137		
BSA GUNS	51, 85	
BY SWORD & MUSKET.....	94	
C		
C&G ANTIQUE FIREARMS.....	114	
CITY AIRWEAPONS (LINCOLN)	47	
COOLGAME	84	
CRAWLEY SURPLUS STORE.....	47	
CUSTOM TARGETS	46	
D		
D&B MILITARIA	154	
DPT EURO	92	
DREWS LAB	114	
DURRANTS AUCTIONEERS	153	
E		
EDGAR BROTHERS.....	21	
EMERALD COUNTRY STORE.....	50	
ESCORT GUNLEATHER	84	
ETON CASTLE.....	35, 153	
F		
FORGE CONSULTING.....	116, 137	
FSU CONNECTIONS	45	
G		
GAVIN GARDINER	156	
GILBERT DISTRIBUTION	46	
GMK	69	
GRAHAM CURRIE.....	146	
GREEN JACKET ANTIQUES	156	
GT SHOOTING.....	45	
GUNSHOP.....	66	
H		
HANNAMS RELOADING... 111, 114, 129		
HAWKE OPTICS	15, 68	
HENRY KRANK.....	102-105	
HIGHLAND OUTDOORS.....	98	
HUNTROYDE HOME FARM.....	25	
J		
JAKEMAN SPORTS	46	
JC MILITARIA	145	
JMS SPORTING.....	88	
JOHN ROTHERY.....	20	
K		
KEMPTON ARMS FAIR.....	147	
KIRKLEES GUNSHOP.....	115	
L		
LAAF	19	
LINTRAN	9	
M		
MICHAEL J NOBLE.....	155	
MICHAEL TAWN.....	30-31	
MILITARY 1ST.....	IBC	
MYFENIX	92	
N		
NAPIER.....	25	
NOCKOVER TARGETS.....	84	
NORMAN CLARK.....	130	
O		
OGDENS	88	
P		
PBIR ILLUMINATIONS	116	
PEMBROKE FINE ARMS.....	155	
PETE HOLDER.....	157	
PLATOON	146	
PRACTICAL SHOOTING SUPPLIES .	141	
R		
R&B SPORTING	140	
RANGE RIGHT.....	IBC	
RON DALEY AIRGUNS	47	
RUAG AMMOTEC UK.....	113	
S		
SCOTT COUNTRY	IFC, 73	
SENTRY TRADING.....	99	
SEVERNSIDE ARMS.....	114	
SHOOTERS RIGHTS ASSOCIATION .	155	
SHOOTING SUPPLIES .	110, 129	
SOUTH YORKSHIRE SHOOTING SHOW 25		
SOUTHERN GUN CO.....	115	
SOVEREIGN ARMS FAIRS	155	
SPECIAL AUCTION SERVICES.....	147	
SPORTING SERVICES	92	
ST GUNS.....	115	
STOCKPORT MILITARIA COLLECTORS SOCIETY	155	
STS NORTHWALES	56	
SURESHOT AIRGUNS	50	
SWAROVSKI UK	83	
T		
TACTICAL SCOPE	109	
TALKING HEADSTES.....	96	
THE OLD BRIGADE.....	146	
THE SKIPTON GUNROOM.... 50, 94, 140		
THOMAS JACKS	57, 79, 89, 95	
TRACKSIDE AIRGUN.....	46	
TW CHAMBERS	46	
U		
UK CUSTOM SHOP.....	88	
V		
VIKING ARMS	3, 63, 97, 117	
W		
WATERLOO MILITARIA	147	
WEIHRACH	78	
WEST ST ANTIQUES.....	25, 155	
WESTLAKE ENGINEERING.....	130	
WHITBY	54, 94	
WILSON AND WILSON.....	64-65	
WJ BOWMAN.....	140	
Z		
ZMW MILITARIA	146	

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